



# JEAN PAUL LEMIEUX

Life & Work

By Michèle Grandbois

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# Contents

03  
**Biography**

19  
**Key Works**

46  
**Significance & Critical Issues**

57  
**Style & Technique**

65  
**Where to See**

72  
**Notes**

78  
**Glossary**

95  
**Sources & Resources**

103  
**About the Author**

104  
**Copyright & Credits**

A photograph of Jean Paul Lemieux, an elderly man with white hair and glasses, wearing a grey cardigan over a light green collared shirt. He is standing in a studio, holding a paintbrush in his right hand and applying paint to a large, dark, textured canvas. To his left, a portion of another painting is visible, showing a figure in a yellow garment with a white beaded necklace. In the foreground, a palette with various colors of paint and a wooden easel are partially visible. The word "BIOGRAPHY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# BIOGRAPHY

**Jean Paul Lemieux (1904–1990), painter, illustrator, critic, and teacher, is one of the most significant artists in the history of Canadian modernity. While Lemieux evolved on the margins of the principal art movements of his time, his oeuvre belongs with the great figurative exploration of the twentieth century. Born in Quebec City, he chose to pursue his artistic and teaching career in his native city. His art and his thought radiated outward from that centre for more than half a century.**



## CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Jean Paul Lemieux<sup>1</sup> was born on November 18, 1904. His father, Joseph Flavien, an agent with Greenshields Ltd., a large supplier of wholesale merchandise,<sup>2</sup> was often absent because his work required him to travel. His business was next door to the family residence at 68 rue Saint-Joseph, where Joseph Flavien's wife, Corinne Blouin, Jean Paul, and his older sister, Marguerite, lived with an elderly aunt and a domestic servant. In 1908, after the birth of a new baby, Henri, the family moved to a luxurious Victorian-style greystone house at 128 Grande Allée Est in the city's Upper Town.



Jean Paul Lemieux (*left*) with his brother, Henri, at the Kent House hotel, c. 1910.

Growing up in both English- and French-speaking milieus, Jean Paul had all the advantages of a privileged childhood. Winters were spent in Quebec City, but from May to November the family stayed at the Kent House hotel (now the Manoir Montmorency), a summer resort about twelve kilometres outside the city, overlooking the spectacular Montmorency Falls. Lemieux looked back on his early childhood as the "age of perfect happiness" and depicted his time there in *1910 Remembered*, 1962, and *Summer of 1914 (L'été de 1914)*, 1965.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Summer of 1914 (L'été de 1914)*, 1965, oil on canvas, 79.2 x 175.5 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. Kent House, presently known as Manoir Montmorency, is visible at the top left.

When Lemieux was ten years old, he met an American artist who was painting pictures at the Kent House for the restoration of one of the hotel lodges. "His name was Parnell," Lemieux would later recall. "I got into the habit of going to



watch him work, and I saw him paint some very big canvases. I was fascinated. That was when I began to make sketches."<sup>3</sup> Nothing more is known of Parnell or his career, but his passage through Jean Paul's life in 1914 had a profound effect on the young boy's destiny.<sup>4</sup> That summer, inspired by the extraordinary view of the waterfall, Jean Paul painted his first watercolour.

In autumn 1916 Corinne and the children left Quebec City. Marguerite suffered from chronic rheumatism and her doctors recommended the climate of California. In Berkeley, Jean Paul and Henri continued their schooling in English, and the family went on trips to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Jean Paul was taken to visit movie studios in Hollywood and acquired an interest in cinema. Marguerite settled permanently in California, where she married in 1919.

### EDUCATION: THE MONTREAL YEARS

In 1917 the Lemieux family moved to Montreal. There Jean Paul went to the Collège Mont-Saint-Louis, then Loyola College. During this period he took lessons in watercolours and, in 1926, began studies with the respected Canadian Impressionist painter Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté (1869-1937). Suzor-Coté taught a class in a studio he occupied in the home of sculptor Alfred Laliberté (1878-1953). Several other artists had studio spaces there, including Maurice Cullen (1866-1934), Robert Pilot (1898-1967), and Edwin Holgate (1892-1977), painters who made a living from their art, exhibited regularly, and belonged to the Arts Club of Montreal.

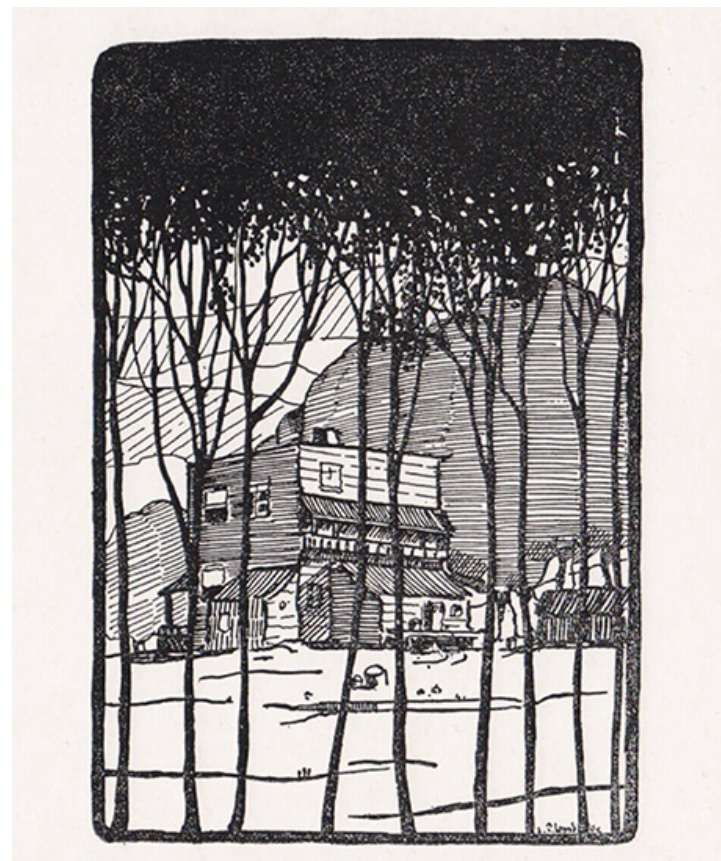


Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, *Passing Shadows, Nicolet River* (*Les ombres qui passent, rivière Nicolet*), 1925, oil on canvas, 102.8 x 138.6 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

In September 1926 Lemieux enrolled at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in order to become a professional painter. The basis of the curriculum was drawing, "the single indispensable key to the fine arts."<sup>5</sup> Lemieux never minded the long, laborious sessions of copying antiquities and ornaments. His respect for the importance of drawing never diminished, and he loved to repeat Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's (1780-1867) famous remark: "I'll put a sign on the door of my studio: 'Here we teach drawing, and create painters.'"<sup>6</sup>

At the École des beaux-arts in Montreal there was absolutely no tolerance for modern art. As the director, Emmanuel Fougé, stated, "You won't see a single 'Fauve,' nor the smallest 'Cubist' or 'Dadaist'—not one of those lazy

slackers."<sup>7</sup> At the time of Lemieux's arrival, Fougerat left the school and was replaced by Charles Maillard, who maintained his predecessor's policy for the next two decades. Having felt constrained within the very conservative environment of the school, Lemieux had good memories of just one of his teachers, Edwin Holgate, his instructor in engraving, who was recognized at that time as one of the best draftsmen in Montreal. Holgate was part of the resurgence of wood engraving in Canada, and was at the height of his career as an illustrator. His influence can be seen in the careful attention to architectural detail in the illustrations Lemieux created for two novels, *La pension Leblanc* by Robert Choquette (1927) and *Le manoir hanté* by Régis Roy (1928).



LEFT: Edwin Holgate, *The Spinning Wheel*, 1928, wood engraving on Japan paper, 27.2 x 20 cm. Many of Holgate's wood engravings of the period depict lumberjacks, blacksmiths, and weavers in rural settings. RIGHT: Edwin Holgate's influence can be seen in this illustration of Lemieux's that was included in the first chapter of Robert Choquette's *La pension Leblanc* (1927), a novel about a boarding house for tourists north of Montreal.

At the École, Lemieux met Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960), developed a camaraderie with Jean-Charles Faucher (1907-1995), and Louis Muhlstock (1904-2001), and established long-lasting friendships with the painters Francesco Iacurto (1908-2001), Jean Palardy (1905-1991), and Jori Smith (1907-2005), and the poet Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau (1912-1943). With the exception of Borduas, whose art would be committed to the nonfigurative and the abstract, most of Lemieux's fellow students were involved in the renewal of figurative art that flourished in Quebec in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>8</sup>



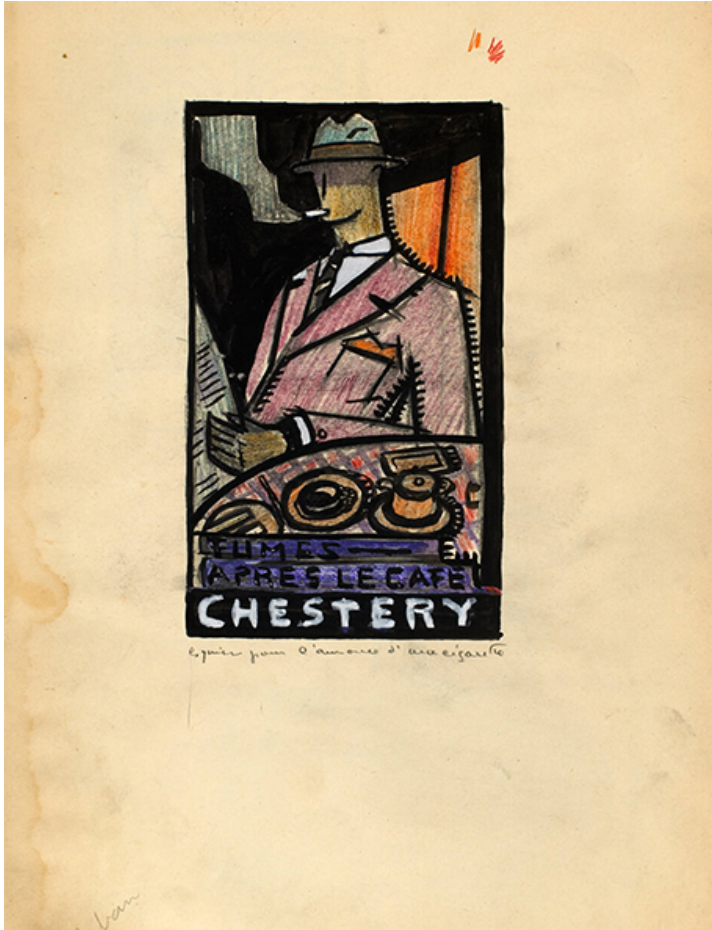


Students of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, c. 1927. Lemieux is seated at the bottom left corner of the photograph.

In the dark days of October 1929 when the world economy crashed and the Great Depression began, Lemieux and his mother were in Paris, staying in Montparnasse, after travelling from London to Spain and then France. The surrealist frenzy that was inflaming the creative minds of Europe did not touch Lemieux. Nor did he pay much attention to Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), or Henri Matisse (1869-1954)—artists he would later defend in his critical writings—all of whom had been excluded from the curriculum at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. However, he did meet with fellow French-Canadian artist Clarence Gagnon (1881-1942), a painter well known for his landscapes of the Charlevoix region who was then working on the illustrations for an edition of Louis Hémon's novel *Maria Chapdelaine*.

On this two-month visit to Paris Lemieux was chiefly interested in recent developments in illustration. He studied advertising art, and took life drawing classes at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and Académie Colarossi. By the end of his stay he thought he had a better idea of the life he wanted to make for himself in the world of art. Back in Montreal he and his friends Jean Palardy and Jori Smith set up a commercial and advertising art company, which they called JANSS, an acronym based on the names of the three artists. But the economic crisis caught up with them and the company closed its doors six months later.<sup>9</sup>





LEFT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Design for Cigarette Advertisement*, c. 1929, black ink, coloured pencil, and graphite on wove paper, 27 x 18 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. This sketch was likely made while Lemieux was working at JANSS. RIGHT: Jori Smith, *Portrait of Jean Paul Lemieux*, c. 1932, 62.1 x 48 cm, charcoal, pastel, and chalk on paper, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. Lemieux, Jori Smith, and Jean Palardy together briefly ran the ad agency JANSS.

After this setback Lemieux took some time off from all activities to think things over. He went to California to stay with his sister, Marguerite, for a while, and on the way back visited museums and galleries in Chicago and New York. Upon seeing Gauguin's works in Boston, he was struck by the extraordinary symbolic power of art, an awareness that would become the cornerstone of the works of his classic period (1956-1970). In addition, American Social Realism interested him, as did the Ashcan School, with its descriptive studies of the contemporary city and the daily lives of ordinary people. He was impressed by the Works Progress Administration, which had generated a vast movement of muralist art in the United States.

Encouraged by his European and American discoveries, Lemieux returned to his studies at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in 1931; he would graduate in 1934. In the evenings he often took part in the studio sessions that Edwin Holgate offered to his students and interested friends who wanted to practise the art of drawing the nude model. Others in attendance were Borduas, Stanley Cosgrove (1911-2002), Saint-Denys Garneau, and Jori Smith. Lemieux also met Goodridge Roberts (1904-1974) there; he found the discussions between Holgate and Roberts particularly stimulating, the latter having, in 1927-28, studied at the Art Students League of New York under the tutelage of John Sloan (1871-1951), a realist landscape artist of the Ashcan School.

## TEACHING

Newly graduated in 1934, Lemieux was hired as an assistant teacher of drawing and design at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, his alma mater. The following year he moved to the recently founded École du meuble, where the director, Jean-Marie Gauvreau (1903-1970), hoped to create a synthesis of culture, technology, and the decorative arts. In this free atmosphere, Lemieux taught painting and perspective drawing. Among his colleagues were Maurice Gagnon (1904-1956), professor of art history, and the architect Marcel Parizeau (1898-1945), who opened Lemieux's eyes to the great modernist painters of the School of Paris.<sup>10</sup>

Lemieux accepted a teaching position at the École des beaux-arts de Québec, in Quebec City, in 1937, and in June of that same year married Madeleine Des Rosiers, an artist he had met as a student at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. On his return to Quebec City he had three careers on the go at the same time: painter, teacher, and art critic.



LEFT: Madeleine and Jean Paul Lemieux, outside the church on their wedding day in June of 1937. RIGHT: Madeleine Des Rosiers, *Port-au-Saumon—Cap au Saumon North Shore, St. Lawrence River, Que.*, c. 1937, oil on panel, 20 x 26.5 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Port-au-Saumon is a few kilometres upstream from where Lemieux painted *Those Beautiful Days (Les beaux jours)*, 1937, a portrait of his wife overlooking Port-au-Persil.

At the Montmorency Gallery in Quebec City the following year, he and Madeleine had a joint exhibition, which was favourably received by the critics, and the Musée de la province de Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec) bought one painting from each artist. Despite her success, Madeleine at this point gave up painting to devote herself to her husband's career. Their only child, Anne Sophie, would be born in 1945.

In September 1940 the couple moved out of the city to an old stone house on the cliff top at Courville, which Lemieux recorded in his painting *Portrait of the Artist at Beauport-Est (Portrait de l'artiste à Beauport-Est)*, 1943. Surrounded by gardens, the house was overflowing with antique furniture and other



interesting objects that Jean Paul and Madeleine had brought back home after vacations in the Charlevoix region, where they were often accompanied by their friends Jean Palardy (1905–1991) and Jori Smith (1907–2005). Jean Paul and Madeleine were invested in the movement to preserve Quebec's cultural heritage, a movement led by art historian Gérard Morisset (1898–1970) and the ethnologist Marius Barbeau (1883–1969), who would become lifelong friends of theirs.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Portrait of the Artist at Beauport-Est (Portrait de l'artiste à Beauport-Est)*, 1943, oil on panel, 63.5 x 106.6 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. This painting shows Jean Paul and Madeleine Lemieux tending their garden in the bustling neighbourhood of Courville. Courville is very close to Montmorency Falls and Kent House, where Lemieux spent many of his childhood summers.

In Lemieux's classes, the atmosphere was always one of trust and freedom. He was open to the art of the past as well as to contemporary art. He conceived his role as a teacher to be that of a guide who does not impose a method, but rather helps his students to find the path of their own talent. "I have never believed that you can show someone how to paint. You can teach the rudiments, the techniques, the tricks of the trade, but you can't teach painting."<sup>11</sup> Several of his students, including Edmund Alleyn (1931–2004), Michèle Drouin (b. 1933), Benoît East (b. 1915), Marcelle Ferron (1924–2001), and Claude Picher (1927–1998), went on to have successful careers in Quebec and internationally.

Outside the classroom, Lemieux readily shared with his students his passion for and extensive knowledge of traditional Québécois art, captivating them during visits to churches on the Beauport Coast and Île d'Orléans.

In 1965 Jean Paul Lemieux retired from the École des beaux-arts de Québec. He was sixty-one years old, and from now on he would dedicate himself entirely to his art.





This photograph of Lemieux and his students was taken during the Saturday drawing classes at the Musée de la province de Québec, organized by the École des beaux-arts de Québec, on March 20, 1948.

## ART CRITICISM

In 1935 Lemieux embarked on a career as an art critic. For the next ten years he was actively engaged in writing in both French and English for journals and newspapers, including *Le Jour*, *Regards*, *Maritime Art*, and *Canadian Art*. In a tone that was measured, though combative and sometimes polemical, he set out his thoughts on the transition to modernity in art and what it would require: a broad knowledge of Western art, openness to contemporary trends in Europe and the United States, the democratization of art, and so on.

Although he was the first to comment on abstraction in the French-Canadian press, Lemieux did not wholeheartedly embrace the practice of abstraction, which he perceived as “a degeneration of Cubism, combining colour for the sake of colour with form for the sake of form, with no care for the subject that was treated.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, throughout his career as a painter, Lemieux would never turn to abstraction.

In critical texts published in 1938 Lemieux defended the democratization of art. He hoped to see the establishment of a muralist movement in Canada that placed fine art in public spaces similar to the one initiated in the United States during the Depression. In his own first planned mural, “Québec (projet de peinture murale),” which was never realized, he

## A New Modern Setting in Montreal

By JEAN-PAUL LEMIEUX

Graduate teacher of l'École des Beaux-Arts, Montreal.  
Teacher of Fine-Art Drawing, Cabinet-Making Department,  
Montreal Technical School.

BEAUTY in linear decoration, sobriety in taste regarding colour blending, perfection in lighting distribution and every modern device for the fulfillment of every woman's vanity, such is the “Salon de Beauté” recently opened at Morgan's.



Operated by “Antoine of Paris” who has similar “salons” in Paris, London and New York, it can boast of the atmosphere peculiar to such places in the great continental cities or the American metropolis. It offers the utmost in the art of modelling the hair, and the ability and ingenuity with which its “coiffeuses” and “coiffeuses” work are unsurpassable. It possesses, in fact, everything to gratify the vanity of the feminine public: from the very ancient art of facial rejuvenation to the very modern apparatus for drying the hair in a few minutes.

Situated on the fifth floor, it comprises a “Reception Room,” a large room used for hair-cut, manucure and shampoo, one

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“A New Modern Setting in Montreal” by Jean Paul Lemieux appeared in *Technique: Revue industrielle/Industrial Review* in November 1935. Though the magazine published articles in French and English, Lemieux wrote this article about interior design in English.



envisioned a vast horizontal panorama of Quebec City, with the city dominated by the snowy peak of Cap Diamant and an accurate rendering of the neighbourhoods below, their architectural forms swarming with life, protected by the river, while the Upper Town was secure within its fortifications.

### EARLY SUCCESS

After his return from the United States in 1931, Lemieux began to show work in the annual Spring Exhibition held by the Art Association of Montreal. In 1934 he won the William Brymner Prize, an award for artists under the age of thirty. Though the piece that won the prize, *House at Éboulements (Maison aux Éboulements)*, c. 1934, is now lost, *Seascape, Bay St. Paul (Marine, Baie St. Paul)*, 1935, is painted in the same style that the honoured work would have been. In that same year he began his frequent participation in the annual exhibitions of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Seascape, Bay St. Paul (Marine, Baie Saint-Paul)*, 1935, oil on board, 13.8 x 17.5 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. With their fluid brushwork and vibrant colour palettes, landscapes by Lemieux from this period show the influence of Group of Seven members A.Y. Jackson and Edwin Holgate.



Also in 1934 the Musée de la province de Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec), which had just opened its doors the year before, purchased its first painting by Lemieux, *Afternoon Sunlight (Soleil d'après-midi)*, 1933. It was his first sale to an institution.<sup>13</sup> Over the years, the museum acquired many major paintings by the artist, as well as drawings and illustrated books.

During his years in Montreal, from 1931 to 1937, Lemieux produced mostly portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes. His work was influenced by the landscape aesthetic of the Group of Seven and by the regionalist principles of American Social Realism; from Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) he assimilated a rigorous approach, and from Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), the use of symbolism. He discussed these influences in his writing, and they can be seen in his paintings of the time; *Those Beautiful Days (Les beaux jours)*, 1937, provides a good example.

As the 1940s began and Canadian painting moved farther away from the figurative, for example, with the works of Fritz Brandtner (1896–1969), David Milne (1882–1953), and Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960) and his fellow Automatistes, Lemieux reacted by going in the opposite direction, creating works that were more narrative than ever. In what is known as his primitivist period (1940–1946), his art borrowed from the Italian primitives and from naïve art. Several large compositions combining religious and secular content date from this period, notably *The Disciples of Emmaus (Les disciples d'Emmaüs)*, 1940; *Lazarus (Lazare)*, 1941; *Our Lady Protecting Quebec City (Notre Dame protégeant Québec)*, 1942; and *Corpus Christi, Quebec City (Fête-Dieu à Québec)*, 1944. Lemieux's sense of humour could often be perceived as biting, and many of these works are imbued with his mischievous character. In *Lazarus*, one of the parishioners is dozing off during the sermon, while in *Corpus Christi, Quebec City*, a little boy is seen urinating against a tree.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Our Lady Protecting Quebec City (Notre Dame protégeant Québec)*, 1942, oil on canvas, 64 x 49.2 cm, Séminaire de Québec, Quebec City.



By the mid-1940s Lemieux was considered an artist in the first rank of young Canadian painters. He was not a member of Montreal's Contemporary Arts Society but was nonetheless invited by the society's founder, John Lyman (1886-1967), to take part in its exhibition *Art of Our Day* in 1940. The work Lemieux showed, *The Disciples of Emmaus*, was then selected by Marius Barbeau (1883-1969) for his book *Painters of Quebec*.<sup>14</sup>

In 1942 *The Village Meeting* (*L'assemblée*), a work he had created in 1936, was chosen for *Aspects of Contemporary Painting in Canada*, an exhibition that toured nine American cities.<sup>15</sup> In 1944, the same work was included in *Canadian Art, 1760-1943*, an exhibition held at the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Connecticut. The following year, *Lazarus*, 1942, was part of the first exhibition organized by UNESCO, showcasing work from twenty-six countries at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris. From this point on, Lemieux's art would be known beyond the North American continent.

### A CRITICAL EYE ON HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Lemieux closely followed the great debate about modernism, centred on Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960) and Alfred Pellon (1906-1988), who with their respective manifestos, *Refus global* and *Prisme d'yeux*, polarized the art scene in the late 1940s. Lemieux's view, however, was that he was a victim of this avant-gardism. "I no longer dared to paint. I was afraid of appearing reactionary," he admitted. "The liberation I welcomed with so much enthusiasm very quickly turned into slavery of the worst kind.... Figurative painting was tolerated, but with strict reservations..."<sup>16</sup>

It was long presumed that between 1947 and 1951 Lemieux practically ceased to paint. However, though less is known about this period, and it was a time for Lemieux of intense self-reflection about his artistic practice, he nevertheless produced studio works as well as loosely sketched oils of the Charlevoix landscape. The studio works often consisted of humorous scenes and compositions reflecting Lemieux's quest for a simpler pictorial language.

As a champion of modernity Lemieux reacted against the moral rigidity and self-righteousness of his time, and protested the glorification of rural life promoted by the conservative ideology of the Duplessis era. In his social-realist vein he did not hesitate to satirize bourgeois anglophone society, then in a



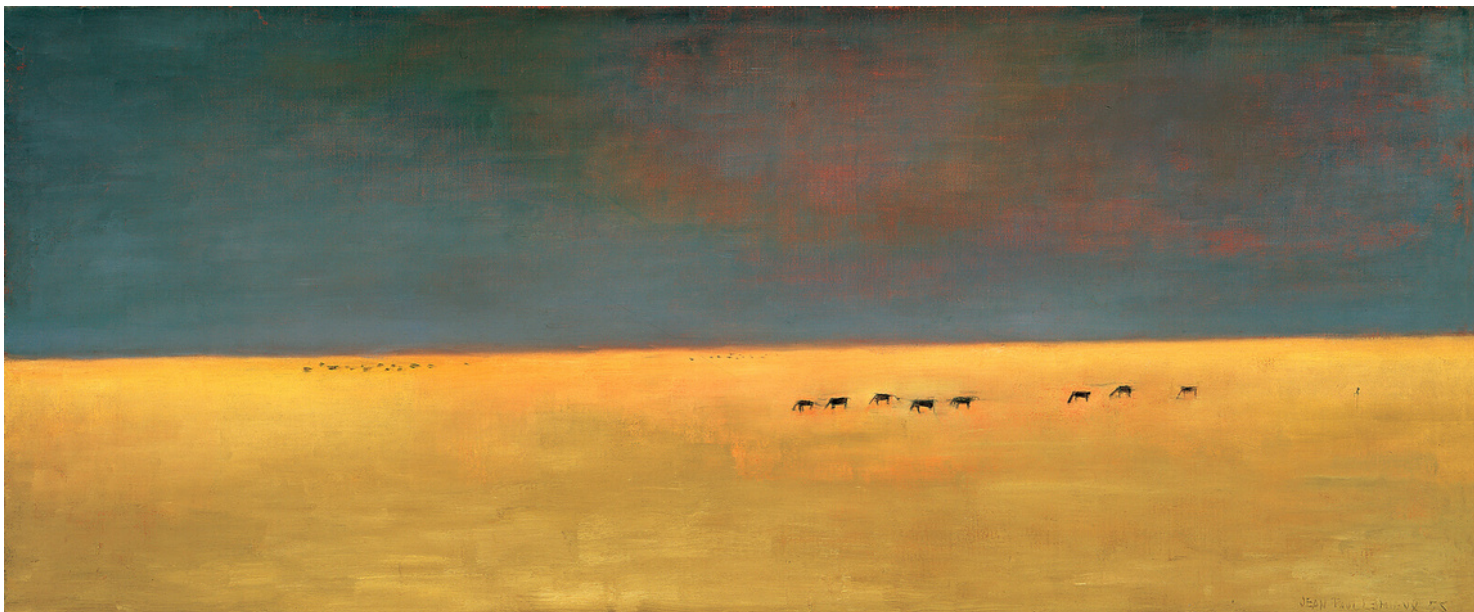
LEFT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Birds I Have Known/ Les drôles d'oiseaux que j'ai connus*, 1947, watercolour, gouache, and graphite on wove paper, 45.5 x 30.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. In social-realist fashion, Lemieux satirized the English bourgeois that were considered dominant in Quebec at this time. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *L'Action Catholique*, 1945, pen and black ink on wove writing paper, 10.9 x 14 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. This caricature was included in a letter that Madeleine Lemieux sent to Jori Smith in 1945. The drawing would have been highly controversial had it been presented publicly, as it satirizes both a Catholic priest and *L'Action Catholique*, the leading Catholic publication in Quebec.

position of authority in Quebec, as witnessed in his *The Birds I Have Known/Les drôles d'oiseaux que j'ai connus*, 1947, a caricature worthy of Honoré Daumier (1808-1879).

## RECOGNITION AND FAME

In the summer of 1951 Lemieux did return to work, zealously but slowly, allowing himself from six months to a year off between paintings. "Art is like a labyrinth," he explained many years later. "One must search long and ardently for the passage that leads to the light."<sup>17</sup> He was referring, among other works, to his painting *The Ursuline Nuns (Les Ursulines)*, 1951, which in 1952 won first prize at the Concours artistique de la province de Québec.

In 1954 he received a grant from the Royal Society of Canada that allowed him to take a trip to France with his family. This European sojourn resulted in a major change in his pictorial language. "I was absolutely lost in France," he said later. "Everything I tried to paint in Paris looked like Monet or Bonnard. In the south of France it was Matisse or Cézanne. When I got back to Canada I began to paint in a completely different manner."<sup>18</sup> *The Far West (Le Far West)*, 1955, is a prelude to his classic period, which would last from 1956 to 1970. It is characterized by a horizontal format, bare subject matter, and simplified pictorial space; the "synthetist" art of the Nabis, inspired by Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and by the proto-Cubism of Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), formed the basis of his new aesthetic identity.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Far West (Le Far West)*, 1955, oil on canvas, 55.7 x 132.2 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

*The Evening Visitor (Le visiteur du soir)* and *The Noon Train (Le train de midi)*, both from 1956, are emblematic of this new language that ushered in Lemieux's classic period. The vast spaces that began to appear on the surface of his canvases grew from a strange sensation he had experienced the same year on the train between Quebec City and Montreal. "I had the feeling of moving closer and closer to something, but something that was ungraspable, elusive; it escaped me. That was the impression that I attempted to convey."<sup>19</sup>



With this breakthrough in his work, which reflected Lemieux's profound identification with the North, he began to reach a new and much larger audience. Between 1958 and 1965 he had solo shows in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec City. He took part in four biennial exhibitions organized by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. His international reputation was growing, as his works were shown at the Bienal of São Paulo, the Canadian pavilion at the Brussels International Exposition, the Pittsburgh International Exposition, and the Venice Biennale, in addition to exhibitions of Canadian painting in Warsaw, at MoMA in New York, at the Tate Gallery in London, and at the Musée Galliera in Paris.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Fates (Les Parques)*, 1962, oil on canvas, 71.1 x 110.5 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery. Created during his classic period (1956–1970) and exhibited in Lemieux's 1967 retrospective organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, this painting shows the fates, three female figures in classical mythology who spin all life from thread and determine a person's fortune or destiny. Lemieux has imagined them as three women in various stages of life.

As a painter whose work was highly personal yet iconic, figurative yet modern, Lemieux's reputation was now firmly established. There was a consensus among critics regarding the importance and value of his work, and the honours began to pile up. In 1966 Lemieux was received as a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. In Canada's centennial year, 1967, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts mounted a retrospective of his work, which toured to the Musée du Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec) and the National Gallery of Canada. In that same year he received the Canada Council Medal, and in 1968 he became a Companion of the Order of Canada.

### THE FINAL TWENTY YEARS

During the 1970s and 1980s, Jean Paul Lemieux's painting underwent another transformation. As Lemieux was growing older (a preoccupation illustrated in his self-portrait of 1974), the serenity and nostalgia of his classic period (1956–1970) gave way to a new, tragic Expressionist period (1970–1990), with works reminiscent of Edvard Munch (1863–1944), whose famous *The Scream*, 1893, had been heard at the end of the previous century.

Heralding this change, works like *The Aftermath/La ville détruite*, 1968, communicated his existential distress about the future of humanity, and he illustrated these fears in the apocalyptic scenes in his notebook of drawings titled *Year 2082*, 1972. His pessimism is clear in *Dies Irae*, 1982–83, and *Anguish (Angoisse)*, 1988, evokes war or the threat of nuclear conflict. In this late work, Lemieux did not please the public; although the paintings were shown in Quebec City, Montreal, and Trois-Rivières, they did not sell, and the critics ignored them.





Jean Paul Lemieux, *Dies Irae*, 1982-83, oil on canvas, 135.4 x 309 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. This painting's Latin title, which translates to "Day of Wrath," and the dark figures in the foreground, which are repeated in Lemieux's *Untitled (Soldier) (Sans titre [Soldat])*, 1982, convey an ominous feeling.

In the 1970s Lemieux also returned to illustration, an early love from his student years. In 1971 he illustrated Gabrielle Roy's *La petite poule d'eau*. The novelist was a close friend; she too spent summers at Charlevoix. Lemieux had painted her portrait in 1953. In 1981, ten years after illustrating Roy's book, he created illustrations for Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine*. Finally, in 1984-85, he paid homage to his country by illustrating the book *Canada-Canada*, a collection of writings on each province and territory by prominent Canadian authors.

Lemieux was an established artist in the political world as well. In 1967 he painted a mural in the Charlottetown Confederation Centre (now the Confederation Centre for the Arts), representing the Fathers of Confederation. In 1977 he created the official portrait of the then Governor General of Canada, Jules Léger, and his wife. Two years later he caused an uproar with his very informal portrait of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

Jean Paul Lemieux died in Quebec City in 1990, two years before the retrospective honouring him at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. The catalogue, written by the curator of the exhibition, the art historian Marie Carani, was an enormous, definitive study, situating Lemieux's work in the context not only of Quebec and Canada but also within the great adventure of figurative art in the twentieth century.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh*, 1979, oil on canvas, 203 x 392 cm, Government House, Ottawa. Lemieux was only the second Canadian artist commissioned to paint an official portrait of a reigning monarch. The painting caused quite a stir when it was unveiled, but Lemieux defended it, describing it as "a Canadian painting, nothing to do with the formal English representations of the Queen."





Jean Paul Lemieux in winter, Quebec, c. 1955-63. Photograph by Rosemary Gilliat Eaton.





# KEY WORKS

For more than six decades—from the time he left the École des beaux-arts in Montreal at the beginning of the 1930s until his late career at the end of the 1980s—Jean Paul Lemieux practised painting that reflected a highly personal vision of Quebec, in landscape, portraits, narrative, and religious scenes. His thoughtful approach led him toward a deepening formal purity, culminating in the celebrated images of what is now called his classic period, between 1956 and 1970. These key works show an artist who unceasingly sought to renew the figurative painting of his time.



## AFTERNOON SUNLIGHT 1933



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Afternoon Sunlight* (*Soleil d'après-midi*), 1933

Oil on canvas, 76.7 x 86.7 cm

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City



*Afternoon Sunlight* is a work of the artist's youth, completed before he graduated from the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. It shows that he had taken notice of the ideas of the Group of Seven (Edwin Holgate [1892-1977], Lemieux's favourite teacher at the École, became a member of the Group in 1930), and like them he was aiming for a subjective interpretation of the landscape. He had long been impressed by the magnificent views around the Charlevoix region, which are marked by rhythmically recurring gorges and vertiginously steep headlands. It was a part of the country that had been frequented by Arthur Lismer (1885-1969) and A.Y. Jackson (1882-1974), with the ethnologist Marius Barbeau (1883-1969), in 1925.

In this painting Lemieux depicts the capes at Les Éboulements thrusting out into the water. He reduces the signs of human habitation to an absolute minimum, privileging the successive horizontals of land and water all the way back to the mountains that close off the space, their diagonal forms outlined against a sky filled with cumulus clouds that, viewed from a low angle, seem to be flying fast over the peaks.

The influence of the Group of Seven also appears in Lemieux's use of forceful lines dominated by a generous impasto and richly contrasting colours. The unity of the composition is ruled by the energetic rhythms of nature, which the painter has bathed in the glowing light of a summer afternoon.



A.Y. Jackson, *A Quebec Farm*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 82 x 102.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. A.Y. Jackson's work was widely exhibited in Montreal in the 1920s and 1930s, and Lemieux would have been familiar with the artist's scenes of the Quebec countryside



## THOSE BEAUTIFUL DAYS 1937



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Those Beautiful Days (Les beaux jours)*, 1937

Oil on plywood, 63.6 x 53.5 cm

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City



Jean Paul Lemieux painted *Those Beautiful Days* at Port-au-Persil, between La Malbaie and Saint-Siméon, where he and his young wife, Madeleine Des Rosiers, spent the summer of 1937. The couple, who had been married that June and had very little money, rented a room under the eaves in a rustic *canadienne* house in this tiny hamlet nestled in a cove, where the expanse of the St. Lawrence widens spectacularly to more than twenty kilometres across. The painter very effectively captures the sensation of vertigo one feels looking out over the blue immensity from the peaks of the region's headlands.

In Quebec paintings of the 1920s and 1930s, it was quite common for an artist to include both human figures and landscape. But most painters positioned the figure in front of the landscape, facing toward the viewer, as did, notably, Adrien Hébert (1890–1967), Edwin Holgate (1892–1977), and Lilius Torrance Newton (1896–1980).



LEFT: Lilius Torrance Newton, *Martha*, 1938, oil on canvas, 76.7 x 61.4 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City. Newton, one of Canada's leading portrait painters, was well known for her evocative portraits of figures in landscape settings. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Charlevoix, Québec*, c. 1927–35, black ink and watercolour on wove paper, 27.3 x 37 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. This drawing from one of Lemieux's notebooks appears to record the same landscape that the artist used for the background of *Those Beautiful Days*.

In *Those Beautiful Days*, Lemieux also combines portrait and landscape. But in this work he introduces one of the visual strategies that would characterize

his approach to figurative art and mark his unique contribution to Canadian modernist painting. Choosing a point of view high above and to the side, he reduces the space of the picture, scaling down the background, thus putting to good use Paul Cézanne's (1839–1906) investigations of cavalier perspective. Madeleine, in the foreground, is represented in a three-quarters back view, looking out over the river. Her placement connects her figure closely to the landscape, formally uniting her with it in a special relationship. This work introduces two of Lemieux's fundamental preoccupations, space and time.



## LAZARUS 1941



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Lazarus (Lazare)*, 1941  
Oil on Masonite, 101 x 83.5 cm  
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto



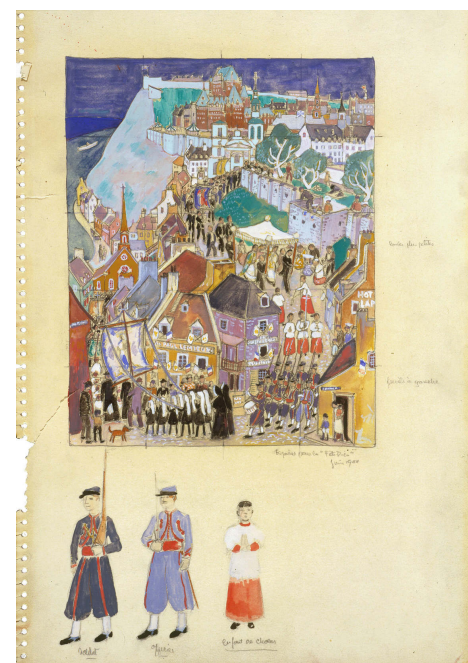
*Lazarus* is among the most fully achieved statements of Jean Paul Lemieux's primitivist period (1940–1946). This narrative work develops in four scenes linked by a road that snakes through the composition. The viewer's eye is first arrested by the church, from which the artist has removed both the roof and the apse. The view from high above allows us to look down on the priest preaching to a more or less attentive congregation. Lemieux's penchant for humorous touches can be seen in details like the parishioner who has fallen asleep with his head against a pillar and the two men having a casual chat in the choir loft.

Outside the church we find three more scenes. In the lower right of the composition a funeral procession makes its way toward the cemetery, where Jesus, dressed in a business suit, blesses Lazarus, who has just risen from the dead. On the left there is a scene of war: six bomber aircraft are flying above the ruins, while villagers and parachutists landing on the ground are killing each other. In the distance, a schooner sails toward the catastrophe under a blue sky enlivened by puffy clouds.

Lemieux's subject is the tranquil existence of a small French-Canadian community that listens to the comforting words of its priest about the miraculous resurrection of Lazarus, while the war rages far away in Europe. At first glance, this narrative picture might seem to belong to the category of folk art. That was the opinion of Lemieux's friend the ethnologist Marius Barbeau (1883–1969), who saw its imagery as primitive and folkloric.<sup>1</sup>

However, *Lazarus* is a complex work by a remarkably sophisticated artist. On the one hand, the syncretism of the views of the church and the modern staging of the resurrection of Lazarus have echoes of the French Pont-Aven School, also called the Nabis, whose influence inspired the renewal of decorative religious art in Quebec from the 1930s to the 1960s. This work by Lemieux belongs with these movements, demonstrating that superficial religious practice cannot nourish an authentic spiritual life. On the other hand, as in *Corpus Christi, Quebec City (La Fête-Dieu à Québec)*, 1944, the painter is using cavalier perspective (also called oblique projection), which was practised at Sienna and Florence by the painters of the Quattrocento and reappeared later in the still lifes of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). This type of perspective from above creates a narrative space by providing a view on different levels, with minimal overlapping.

Along with these European influences, *Lazarus* owes a debt to the social realism of the Ashcan School, which Lemieux learned of in the United States at the beginning of the 1930s. Several aspects of the painting make reference to the school, including the use of caricature and irony, but what viewers mostly remember is the condemnation implied by the juxtaposition of the scenes of war and the preaching of the sermon. These two scenes place drama and detachment in stark contrast: the bombs dropping on a civilian population and the oblivious, untroubled life of a people subjected to the power of the Church.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Study for "Corpus Christi, Quebec City" (Étude pour "La Fête-Dieu à Québec")*, c. 1944, gouache, watercolour, and pencil on paper, 45.7 x 30.5 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

## THE URSULINE NUNS 1951



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Ursuline Nuns (Les Ursulines)*, 1951  
Oil on canvas, 61 x 76 cm  
Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City



*The Ursuline Nuns* signals a maturing of the visual language through which the painter would assert his artistic personality. By simplifying the composition and eliminating modelling, he was able to free himself from the anecdotal elements that had characterized his primitivist period (1940–1946).

For Lemieux, portraying his times in painted form required a long process of investigation, research, and refinement by trial and error. An assessment of his creative process can be made by comparing the final work with the preliminary sketch (pictured on the right), painted the same year. He divides the pictorial space into a restricted range of horizontal, vertical, and angled motifs softened by a few curving lines: the nuns' veils, the three arcades, and a blind doorway. This geometric design has the effect of suggesting permanence, an impression reinforced by the sober colours. In the sketch, the painter opted for a brighter palette dominated by ochre, orange, and green, with a few piercing notes of red. For the finished work he chose colder colours and modulations of black and white. *The Ursuline Nuns* is a striking example of formal and chromatic unity.

The blank walls of the buildings, the bricked-up openings, and the absence of a horizon add a sense of enclosure, increasing the effect of settled permanence. The nuns, who came from Tours and Dieppe in the seventeenth century to devote themselves to the education of Native and French settlers' children, remained a cloistered order until 1967. Lemieux shows them in their garden, the only place they were allowed to go outside the walls of the convent.

*The Ursuline Nuns* is a powerful evocation of the monastic life, and of movement suspended in an undefined moment of time, in which only the tree, the basket of fruit, and the cast shadows bring us back to the reality of a sunny summer day.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Study for "The Ursuline Nuns"* (*Étude pour "Les Ursulines"*), 1951, oil on plywood, 20.1 x 25.5 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. In addition to this oil study, Lemieux also produced a graphite sketch of this composition. He revisited the subject of nuns in several of his classic-period paintings, including *White Sister* (*Sœur blanche*), 1961, and *The Nuns* (*Les Moniales*), 1964.

## THE EVENING VISITOR 1956



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Evening Visitor (Le visiteur du soir)*, 1956

Oil on canvas, 80.4 x 110 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

This image has haunted the collective imagination of Canadians for almost sixty years. Lemieux painted it in 1956, just after his return from a visit to France that had led him to question his perception of the landscape. From this point on, winter and vast, snowy spaces would serve as the background to empty terrain, traversed by universal, silent, anonymous human figures. "From 1956 on ... I no longer saw things the same way. A totally different vision was developing in me, a vision that was above all horizontal, which I had never experienced before; until then I had never noticed how horizontal our country is. And I had to leave the country to realize it. They say you have to go elsewhere to discover yourself, and it's true."<sup>1</sup>

*The Evening Visitor* is among the first paintings to offer evidence of this new approach, which characterizes his classic period (1956-1970). A high, slightly inclined horizon line divides the vast, deserted white plane of snow from the grey plane of the sky. On the left a narrow, dark band advances along the



horizon, evoking dense forest. A thin line made with a delicate brushpoint traces a single road leading to the forest. On the right a mysterious, dominant figure rises up in the absolute stillness of winter.

Who is this evening visitor, wrapped up in his heavy raccoon coat and fur toque? The man, whose face has no features, is not recognizable at first glance. After a moment we see the black soutane below the heavy coat and understand that he is a priest. What is he doing here at nightfall, in this immensity, in the freezing cold of winter? Lemieux has stated that “the evening visitor is simply death. In Quebec we always see him in the guise of a priest who comes to administer the sacrament of the last rites as the evening of life approaches.”<sup>2</sup>

It is worth mentioning that these and other pictures of snow, like *The Priests’ Promenade (La promenade des prêtres)*, 1958, characteristic of Lemieux’s classic period, echo a reflection he jotted in a notebook in 1939: “Snow. Snow and cold. Snow everywhere in the fields, in the forest ... the river is frozen and so are the streams.... All things seemed to have died and a stuck silence accompanies always the flake.”<sup>3</sup>



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Priests’ Promenade (La promenade des prêtres)*, 1958, oil on canvas, 61 x 105.5 cm, collection Pierre Lassonde.



## THE ORPHAN 1956



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Orphan (L'orpheline)*, 1956  
Oil on canvas, 60.9 x 45.6 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



In the art of Jean Paul Lemieux the technical vocabulary is perfectly matched with the emotional content of the image. To convey the distress and loneliness of the orphan child, Lemieux places her in the centre of the picture, shifted slightly to the left; behind her is a field, demarcated by a church and a few buildings, indicating an isolated village. Her head, set on a thin, cylindrical neck, emerges from the black garment that envelops her. All superfluous features are eliminated in the painting of her face. Only the eyes, the nose, and the mouth are left. The simplified rendering extends to the hair and clothing: a white bow placed on top of her meagre, dark coiffure is the sole ornament in the composition.

*The Orphan* is a remarkable illustration of Lemieux's concept of painting as, above all, a flat plane on which he maximizes the expressiveness of an image while minimizing the forms and colours. The child gazes out at the viewer, her eyes hollow, tear-stained, and shadowed with dull grey circles; her expression is strikingly sad and very moving. Her arresting image establishes, between the spectator and the orphan, a unique exchange that touches on the human condition. Lemieux's paintings excel at creating this kind of rich human contact.

Some years later Lemieux returned to a child's tragedy in a new composition, *Death on a Clear Morning* (*La mort par un clair matin*), 1963. This time the little girl is with her mother. Although they are together the bereaved pair are lonely, imprisoned in their heavy black clothing and the private emotions that overwhelm them. *The Orphan* is a portrait of inescapable despair, while *Death on a Clear Morning* counters the power of death with that of life: the "bright morning" and the light and warmth of the land are echoed in the pastoral backdrop.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Death on a Clear Morning* (*La mort par un clair matin*), 1963, oil on canvas, 106 x 78.5 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

## SUMMER IN MONTREAL 1959



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Summer in Montreal (L'été à Montréal)*, 1959

Oil on canvas, 57.5 x 126.5 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Without being abstract in the strict sense of the word, certain paintings by Jean Paul Lemieux make reference to the vogue for abstraction that had excited the visual arts community of Quebec since the end of the 1930s. It was Lemieux, in his role as art critic, who first introduced the subject of abstract art in the French-Canadian press in 1938. His view of this pictorial form, at the time, was that it was "a degeneration of Cubism, combining colour for the sake of colour with form for the sake of form, with no care for the subject that was treated."<sup>1</sup> He himself at no point in his career ever surrendered to abstraction.

However, Lemieux was always in touch with the art that was being made by his contemporaries, and despite his strong preference for the figurative he did experiment with the symbolic power of free form, reducing the figure to its simplest expression and occasionally touching the boundary of abstraction. His paintings without human figures, particularly the urban scenes, provide several beautiful examples of this slipping between styles.

*Summer in Montreal* is the most notable of these minimalist works that touch lightly on abstraction. The city, as a subject, becomes a pretext for pure plastic form, which with only the smallest of gestures toward the real still owes a great deal to the artist's enduring memories of sweltering summer days in Montreal. The *sfumato* (shading) of the upper section portrays, in tones of orange, yellow, and khaki, the stifling heat that enshrouds the city, a presence merely hinted at by the ethereal, reduced silhouettes of buildings rendered as blocks of colour.



"Cities fascinate me," Lemieux confided. "I see them as emptied, and I would like to paint an entirely deserted city."<sup>2</sup> In 1963 he captured this feeling in a winter landscape, *Snow-covered City* (*Ville enneigée*), which is made up of small rectangles crowded one against the other in a way that suggests the density of an urban conglomeration. In the distance, the silhouettes of buildings delineate the horizon. Elements arranged in the form of a grid suggest a link with Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), who around 1915 began to simplify his landscapes based on the strong lines of the composition, a technique that would soon lead him into abstraction. Mondrian was also a significant influence on Paul-Émile Borduas's (1905-1960) thought, and in the development of the Montreal Plasticiens in the 1950s.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Snow-covered City* (*Ville enneigée*), 1963, oil on canvas 87.5 x 142 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

Whether held captive by the overpowering heat of summer or the frigid cold of winter, in paintings after 1956 Lemieux's city is always imbued with qualities of timelessness and stillness created by minimal artistic means.

## 1910 REMEMBERED 1962



Jean Paul Lemieux, *1910 Remembered*, 1962  
Oil on canvas, 108 x 148.8 cm  
Private collection

*1910 Remembered* initiates the cycle of autobiographical reminiscences at the heart of Jean Paul Lemieux's classic period (1956–1970). In this picture, the painter shows himself as a boy of six, with an intense, laughing gaze, standing in a sailor costume between his parents, Corinne and Joseph Flavien.

"Childhood is light and joy, the age of perfect happiness," he would later say. "It is possible to be happy before the age of ten, and after the age of fifty. Between those two ages it is all struggle and bitter combat."

In 1965 the painter would return to his childhood in two pictures. In *Times Past* (*Les temps passés*) he appears about age ten, at the head of a procession of characters dressed in the costume of the time and filing through a space punctuated by walls, which partially hide them. In this genealogical staging, the first figure on the left is his father, Joseph Flavien, corresponding to the same figure in *1910 Remembered*. Other figures, Lemieux's ancestors from earlier times, sink beneath the surface of the painting until the light completely dissipates their images.



In that same year, 1965, still mining the rich vein of retrospection, the painter produced a panoramic composition, *Summer of 1914* (*L'été de 1914*). It is tempting to see in this second painting a narrative sequel to the episode depicted in *1910 Remembered*, since the two scenes are both set in the park of the Kent House hotel, now called the Manoir Montmorency, although the pavilion and kiosk in *Summer of 1914* are more clearly recognizable as belonging to that setting.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Summer of 1914* (*L'été de 1914*), 1965, oil on canvas, 79.2 x 175.5 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

The artist's symbolic universe is crystallized in these three remarkable works. In *1910 Remembered* he is flanked by his parents, both rendered in side view, facing each other across the canvas. Veritable pillars of a tenderly happy childhood, they frame the little boy in the tight pictorial space, giving him their benevolent protection. Did Lemieux mean to evoke his father's frequent absences from home by showing him half in and half out of the picture? At age six a child's consciousness of self is mediated through his parents. Behind the family trio smaller figures are moving away over the low horizon, into the park, their comparatively tiny shapes emphasizing the immensity of the luminous, cottony sky. Clouds passing over the scene balance the masses of colour that would otherwise be overwhelmed by the light, flat area extending over almost the whole surface.

In *Summer of 1914*, the child's expression has changed. A new consciousness of self has kindled a different light in his eyes. He is now a self-assured and serious boy of ten, detached from his father, who has disappeared from the scene, and from his mother, who is slipping out of the picture on the right. It was precisely here, at the Kent House hotel (which appears in the upper left of the picture) in 1914, that he discovered painting. The revelation came through his meeting with an American artist named Parnell, and for Jean Paul it opened the doors to a new world.

## JULIE AND THE UNIVERSE 1965



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Julie and the Universe (Julie et l'univers)*, 1965

Oil on canvas, 104 x 142.5 cm

Pierre Lassonde Collection

*Julie and the Universe*, with its deserted, snowy landscape, is a quintessential example of Jean Paul Lemieux's classic period (1956-1970). The artist was at the height of his expressive powers in 1965 when he painted this picture. At sixty years old, he had just retired from teaching at the École des beaux-arts de Québec, and he welcomed his liberation with joy. He was now free to devote all his time to painting.



During these years Lemieux drew inspiration from a number of themes, of which the notion of time passing was the most significant and the most sustained. He produced scenes featuring characters of all ages, from childhood to old age. An entire small world of anonymous humanity springs to life on his canvases. Sometimes he looks deep within his own past, evoking memories, as with *1910 Remembered*, 1962, and *Autoportrait*, 1974. His figures are almost always allegories of time: young or old, man or woman, each stands alone against an empty backdrop, fixing the viewer with an intense gaze as if longing to speak to us.

So it is with *Julie and the Universe*, a painting that has become an icon of Lemieux's pictorial maturity. The universe is the land, vast and cold in its winter whiteness. Julie is an emblem of youth, a time when everything is possible. A vertical presence, facing front, she holds us with the openness and candour of her gaze. The warm colour of her coat seems to project her forward; behind her, the low light of a clouded sun defines the landscape. Time and space are masterfully evoked here, and the exchange is richly rewarding.

It is no surprise that this painting, which has appeared in many exhibitions, was an immense success both in Canada and internationally, notably in Russia in 1974. Nor is it surprising that the image figures in the Quebec singer-songwriter Jean Lapointe song *1910 Remembered*<sup>1</sup>, a poetic summation that admirably captures the essence of Lemieux's relationship with time, space, and solitude.

He created characters  
Who seek but never find one another  
Faceless strangers  
Who dream of talking to each other  
Surely there is too much space  
For them to ever hope to meet  
And I think that the passage of time  
Has put too much distance between them

This morning, they were seen  
Crossing a vast, snowy plain  
In a most beautiful procession  
All heading for the same train  
They are going to a party  
For Julie and the universe  
Their heads full of memories  
Of a time when everything was clear.<sup>2</sup>

- Excerpt from "1910 Remembered", 1981, Marcel Lefebvre and Jean Lapointe



Jean Paul Lemieux and Guy Viau, author of *Modern Painting in French Canada*, 1967, admire Lemieux's *Julie and the Universe*, 1965, at the opening of the retrospective exhibition *Jean-Paul Lemieux*, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, in December, 1967.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Visit*, 1967, oil on canvas, 170 x 107.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. By using a close-up framing technique inspired by the cinema, Lemieux gives the figure a predominant presence over the landscape once again in this painting, created two years after *Julie and the Universe*.

## THE EXPRESS 1968



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Express (Le rapide)*, 1968  
Oil on canvas, 101 x 204 cm  
Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City

Jean Paul Lemieux loved travelling by rail because, as he said, “You have time to see the landscape coming, to let it appear, display itself, then vanish.”<sup>1</sup> He introduced the train theme for the first time with *The Noon Train (Le train de midi)* in 1956, at a decisive turning point in his artistic career. From now on he would be known as the painter of “vast white spaces.” He had entered his classic period, a time of artistic maturity that would continue until 1970, assuring him both national and international fame.

The composition of *The Express* reprises that of *The Noon Train*, painted twelve years earlier. In both there are two surface planes with a horizon line that cuts the space by two-thirds, and a dark shape rising above it. A few significant differences between the two paintings show how Lemieux, returning to a previously treated subject, carries it to another, higher degree of symbolism. In *The Noon Train* the train pierces through the space and moves away from the viewer, but in *The Express* the train is coming toward us and a much larger horizontal space covers the two planes with immaculate whiteness.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Noon Train (Le train de midi)*, 1956, oil on canvas, 63 x 110.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Looking at *The Express*, the viewer's eye is held in an attempt to decode what is occurring on this denuded, almost abstract, surface. Only after several seconds do we experience the sensation described by Lemieux of "seeing the landscape coming" when travelling by train. An ingenious formal game allows us to see the train breaking away through a vast expanse of snow, and simultaneously to understand that it is not so much the train itself that the artist wanted to paint but rather the speed of the machine; the title he chose makes that explicit.

The composition of *The Express* appears simple but is in reality dominated by a complex series of evocations of space and time, passage and duration, and the "here and now" of the painting. On this surface the motif of the train is charged with meaning, and expressive of extreme tension; presented differently it might have offered nothing but its formal beauty. Lemieux's art is supported by geometric order, but that takes nothing away from its figurative purpose, which the artist captures by both metaphorical and symbolic means.

## THE AFTERMATH/LA VILLE DÉTRUITE 1968



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Aftermath/La ville détruite*, 1968

Oil on canvas, 50.5 x 136 cm

Private collection

In his mature works, Jean Paul Lemieux looks on the city with distrust. He condemns it in the deserted houses of *Night in Québec-Ouest* (*La nuit à Québec-Ouest*), 1964, and in the boarded-up façades of *Summer in Montreal* (*L'été à Montréal*), 1959. In truth, Lemieux was never a city person in his soul. When the warm weather arrived he always escaped to L'Isle-aux-Coudres, where, after his retirement from teaching in 1965, he devoted himself entirely to painting.

Yet he was fascinated by urban spaces. His earlier enchantment with the glories and charm of Quebec City had given way to disenchantment; it was now the city's transformation that obsessed him. "The machine age with its dreadful uniformity is spreading and crushing all that gave Quebec its unique character among the cities of America."<sup>1</sup>

To Lemieux the contemporary city, a powerful metaphor for modernization, was responsible for a loss of humanity. "I have always distrusted technology and scientists. Some day all their inventions will blow up the world!"<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of the 1960s his disquiet took the form of apocalyptic visions, in which the city was no longer simply an appealing backdrop or one of the characters in a painting but instead took the title role. In *Quebec City Is Burning* (*Québec brûle*), 1967, the city is in flames. In *The Aftermath/La ville détruite*, the city



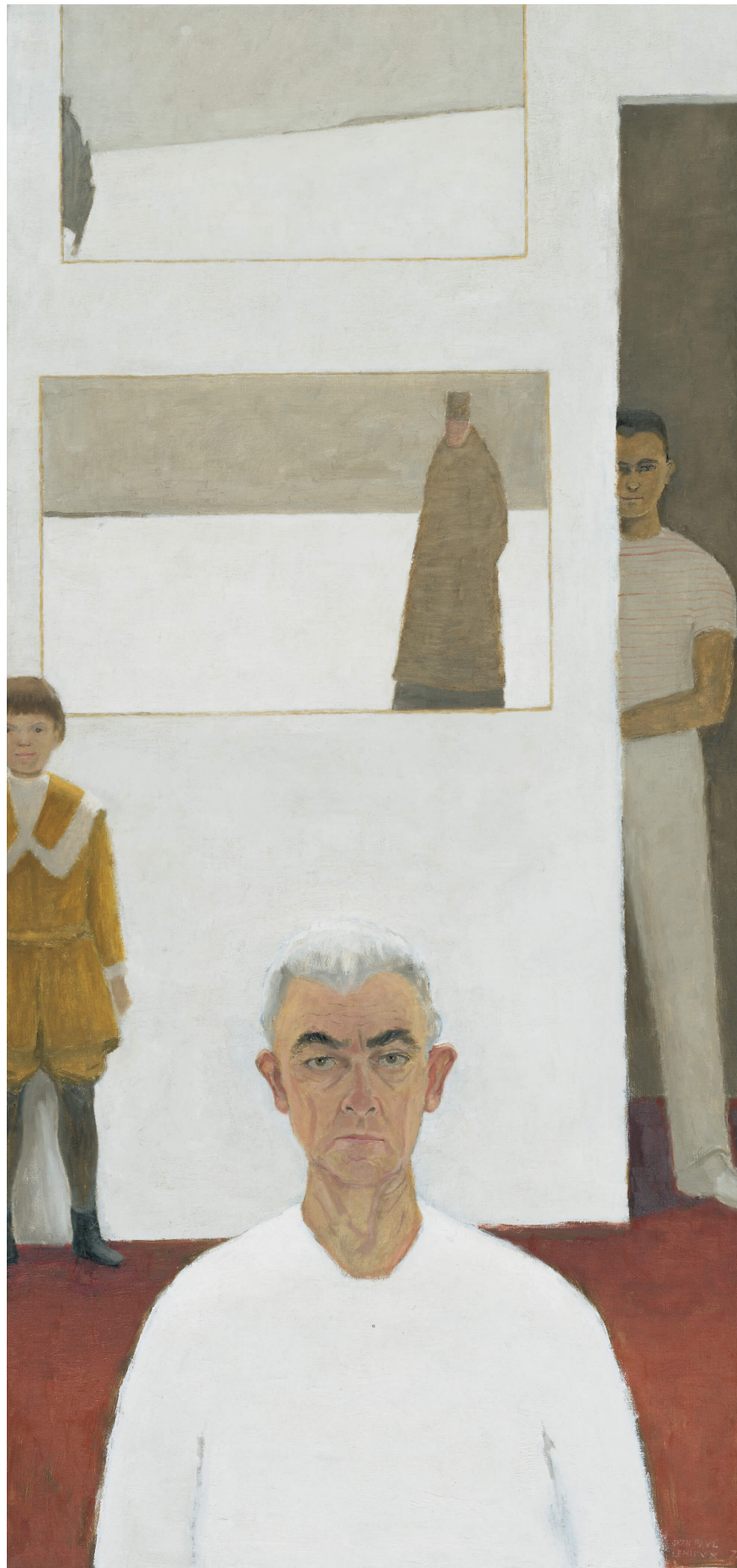
Jean Paul Lemieux, *Quebec City Is Burning* (*Québec brûle*), 1967, oil on canvas 53.5 x 178 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.



centre has been devastated by a nuclear attack, and abandoned. The main street is overrun with atomic mushrooms drawing the eye upward to a horizon of grey towers rising out of a polluted fog, the result of the catastrophe.

Jean Paul Lemieux's first drawings, made when he was eight, were of the wreck of the *Titanic*, and they represent an early, distant source for this tragic iconography. Evidence of the theme of disaster can also be found in the illustrations he designed in 1931 for the science fiction novel *La fin de la terre* by Emmanuel Desrosiers, and in his admiration for painters Monsù Desiderio, a pseudonym for two early-seventeenth-century artists who were famous for their renderings of ruins, catastrophes, fires, and collapsed buildings.

## SELF-PORTRAIT 1974



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Self-portrait (Autoportrait)*, 1974  
Oil on canvas, 167 x 79 cm  
Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City



Jean Paul Lemieux was seventy years old when this canvas was painted, in 1974. It is his only true self-portrait, although during his primitivist period (1940–1946) he did include in his work his own image several times, notably in *portrait of the artist at beauport-est* (*portrait de l'artiste à beauport-est*), 1943, and *corpus christi, quebec city* (*la fête-dieu à québec*), 1944. In 1962 he painted himself as a child in his well-known *1910 remembered*; three years later he did so again in *summer of 1914* (*l'été de 1914*), 1965. Both of these works have become icons of his classic period (1956–1970).

*Self-portrait* documents the stages of the old painter's life. With his back turned to the past, Lemieux looks out toward the spectator, and in his face we read all the loneliness of a man who sees time flowing inexorably away.

Childhood, adolescence, and old age are seen here as they might appear in an *image d'Épinal*. The pictures placed against the white wall evoke earlier times in his life. *the evening visitor* (*le visiteur du soir*), 1956, and *rider in the snow* (*le cavalier dans la neige*), 1967, bear witness to the achievement of Lemieux's artistic maturity. They appear as part of his biography, as players in their own right.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Rider in the Snow* (*Le cavalier dans la neige*), 1967, oil on canvas, 89 x 135 cm, private collection. Lemieux included this painting in *Self-portrait*. With its sloping horizon line and isolated figure in the desolate landscape, *Rider in the Snow* perfectly embodies the tenets of Lemieux's classic-period paintings.

The powerful evocation of time and the painter's insistent "summons" to the viewer in *Self-portrait* are created by a carefully balanced combination of formal elements. The dark-red floor contrasts sharply with the lighter backdrop. The figures face front. Their bodies are cut in half by the walls and frames. The viewer's own reactions are sharpened by the presence of pictures within the picture and by these beings who transcend time and space.



## TURNED TOWARDS THE COSMOS C. 1980–85



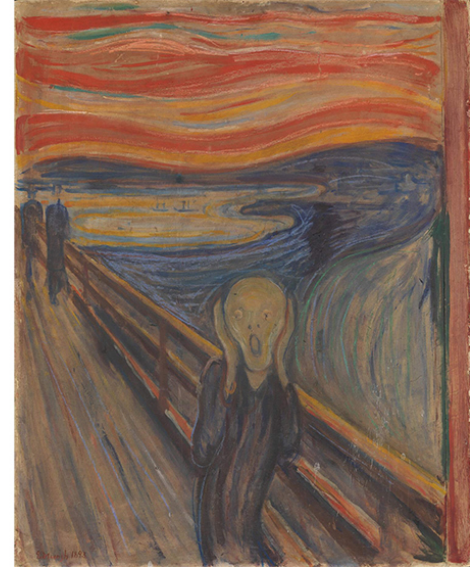
Jean Paul Lemieux, *Turned Towards the Cosmos (Tourné vers le cosmos)*,  
c. 1980–85

Oil on canvas, 135 x 70.5 cm

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City



The pictorial field of this painting, representative of Jean Paul Lemieux's Expressionist period (1970-1990), is entirely given over to Man in quest of meaning. The essence of the subject is simply a person, apparently young, looking up at the sky. The immensity of the celestial vault above, faintly brightened by a few gleams of starlight, here takes the place of the vast terrestrial expanses that we have come to expect from Lemieux. Visible on the surface of this canvas is the unmistakable imprint of a man who at the end of his life is giving material form to the terrors aroused in him by human destiny. His tormented vision is expressed in a thick pictorial material applied in broad, bitter brushmarks. Dark colours dominate all of his paintings from the 1980s and their titles are disturbing, such as *Sunlight at the Scene of War* (*Le soleil de la guerre*), c. 1982; *Nuclear Winter* (*Hiver nucléaire*), 1986; *Hell Is Other People* (*L'enfer, ce sont les autres*), 1987; and *Anguish* (*Angoisse*), 1988.



LEFT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Anguish* (*Angoisse*), 1988, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 63.5 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893, tempera and crayon on cardboard, 91 x 73.5 cm, National Gallery, Oslo. Lemieux's late-period *Anguish* shows Munch's influence, both in the child's pose and in the painting's overwhelmingly melancholic mood.

*Turned Towards the Cosmos* belongs with these tragic paintings, which are part of the Expressionist tradition of Edvard Munch (1863-1944), whose Nordic sensibility Lemieux shares. Almost a century after it was painted, Munch's famous *The Scream*, 1893, echoed through Lemieux's later paintings, and it became associated with the Neo-Expressionism that brought figurative painting back to Europe and North America at the end of the 1970s.

When art historian Marie Carani met Lemieux, then aged eighty-five, he told her he was not aware of these recent developments in art, although he admitted to sharing the feelings they express. Secluded from the world in his refuge in L'Isle-aux-Coudres, Jean Paul Lemieux continued to practise an art that was still vital, still open to the present day, and always, until the end, fundamentally independent.



# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Jean Paul Lemieux's unique painterly vision and ardent defence of Quebec's cultural heritage earned him a broad following. His landscapes, with their infinite spaces and the figures that bring them to life and dramatize their loneliness, made their mark on the Canadian imagination when they were painted and continue to do so today. The modernist aesthetic and universal appeal of his work are celebrated by the public and are also of great interest to scholars of art history. These accessible and instantly recognizable paintings represent Jean Paul Lemieux's deeply human response to the fundamental questions raised by the aesthetic investigations of his time.



### CHOOSING QUEBEC CITY

Jean Paul Lemieux would not have chosen to be born anywhere but in Quebec City, an enchanting old walled town, and he lamented the disappearance of its charm as modernization advanced. But he never grew tired of painting his city-muse and city-museum, where he was born and where he would die. He spent most of his life either in the city or not far away from it. At least thirty of the paintings he created after he returned permanently in 1937 showcase its beauty, while at the same time they bear witness to the patient evolution of his style, which is revealed when one compares

*January in Quebec (Janvier à*

*Québec)*, 1965 (right), painted in his later, classic era (1970–1990), with *Corpus Christi, Quebec City (La Fête-Dieu à Québec)*, 1944 (below), from his earlier, primitivist period (1940–1946).



Jean Paul Lemieux, *January in Quebec City (Janvier à Québec)*, 1965, oil on canvas, 106.4 x 151.5 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

From the beginning of the twentieth century Montreal and Toronto were the most important centres in the rising artistic culture of Canada. When Jean Paul Lemieux decided to make his birthplace his permanent home and embarked there on a triple career as painter, teacher, and critic, he showed a remarkable spirit of independence. He was always in touch with the latest advances in painting and teaching as they were occurring in Montreal in the 1920s and 1930s, and was certainly aware that that city was at the heart of the Canadian art scene, as it had been since the middle of the nineteenth century. With the establishment of the Society of Canadian Artists in 1867, and the Art Association of Montreal (now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts) in 1880, Montreal had definitively replaced Quebec City as the most important art centre in Canada.





Jean Paul Lemieux, *Corpus Christi, Quebec City (La Fête-Dieu à Québec)*, 1944, oil on canvas, 152.7 x 122 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. The study for this painting, which features detailed figure studies, is reproduced in the Key Works section alongside the work *Lazarus (Lazare)*, 1941.

Quebec City was now more a centre of political than of cultural power. However, the creation of a school of fine arts in 1922 and the Musée de la province de Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec) in 1933 undoubtedly had an influence on Lemieux's decision to settle there. Yet, a disheartening observation he made shortly after his arrival may convey some



sense of the isolation experienced in the capital: "Exhibitions of paintings that tour the country never come to Quebec City, for the simple reason that there are no galleries with the necessary conditions of light, neutral background walls, etc.... And so we miss out ... on a lot of exhibitions that could educate us and awaken an interest in the beauty of art."<sup>1</sup>

### AMERICAN INSPIRATION

Lemieux's progressive opinions were published widely in both the Quebec and the English-Canadian press in the years between 1937 and 1951. He was one of the first French-Canadian critics to advocate an openness to the art of the United States: "If, as seems certain, America is to be the new world capital of art, we must take our proper place beside our English compatriots and our American neighbours."<sup>2</sup>

When Jean Paul Lemieux assessed the quality of artists who were working in Quebec, he asked, "Do we have a Diego Rivera, a José Clemente Orozco, a [Thomas Hart] Benton or Grant Wood, to name only a few of the important artists now working in Mexico and the United States? ... We have Suzor-Coté and Clarence Gagnon, but they are primarily landscape painters... Their paintings are slavishly faithful to the subjects they depict. They never stray from that path, never turn aside to pursue a more daring interpretation, to create a more original synthesis, or to seek a deeper understanding of the essences of things."<sup>3</sup>



LEFT: Grant Wood, *American Gothic*, 1930, oil on beaverboard, 74 x 62 cm, Art Institute of Chicago. Jean Paul Lemieux looked to American regionalist artists like Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton for inspiration. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Port-au-Persil*, 1950, oil on board, 26 x 21 cm, private collection. This painting recalls American regionalist Grant Wood's famous portrait.



Art was a precarious occupation, and to counter that insecurity and the prejudices against artists, Lemieux advocated the American model, citing the example of the Federal Art Project run by the Works Progress Administration, which offered grants to artists working on government buildings. "In the United States the government provides work for artists, employing them to paint murals in public buildings, universities and schools.... Besides covering large empty surfaces with colourful compositions, sometimes showing scenes from the history of the U.S. state in which they are located, sometimes illustrating science or the arts, these murals are highly educational; they are seen and admired by multitudes of people.... Why should we not do the same here?"<sup>4</sup>

Lemieux's admiration of American artists was a key influence in his decision to paint murals. In 1952, he painted a preparatory study for a mural entitled "Québec," which never materialized. However, the city of his birth would be the subject of another mural project, commissioned by the Université Laval, for the

entry hall of the Health Sciences Building, where it can still be seen. Three metres high by five and a half metres wide, this work was completed in 1957. Lemieux made a series of preparatory sketches, the last of which, a study in oil on canvas, has been preserved intact. Unlike the narrative aesthetic he had planned for his first mural project, this one shows the austerity of forms characteristic of his classic period (1956–1970).



Jean Paul Lemieux, preparatory sketch for "Québec (projet de peinture murale)," 1949, oil on canvas, 25.4 x 101.6 cm, collection of her royal majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Lemieux was sixty when he completed his last mural, *Charlottetown Revisited*, 1964. The composition is refined to simplicity, but warmed by luminous colours that contrast with the marked severity of the characters, their elongated shapes swathed in black and wearing top hats. Their geometric silhouettes are in harmony with the minimalist neoclassical architecture of Province House, Charlottetown. A similar composition is found on the Prince Edward Island page of the book *Canada-Canada*, published in 1984–85, which Lemieux illustrated.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Charlottetown Revisited* (*Charlottetown revisitée*), 1964, oil on canvas, 197.2 x 380 cm, Confederation Centre for the Arts, Charlottetown. In 1964 the recently constructed Confederation Centre for the Arts, with funds donated by Samuel and Saidye Bronfman of Montreal, was able to commission Lemieux to paint this mural of three of the Fathers of Confederation in front of Province House.



### AN ADVOCATE FOR CANADIAN ARTISTS

The subjects Lemieux reflected on in his critical writing—the democratizing and social functions of art, its importance as outreach, the isolation of regional artists—were central to the discussion at the Kingston meeting known as the Conference of Canadian Artists in June 1941, which had been organized by Lemieux’s friend André Biéler (1896–1989) in close cooperation with artists in the United States. This important event (which led to the founding of the Federation of Canadian Artists) featured Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975), the American Regionalist, as guest of honour.<sup>5</sup>

In a letter responding to Biéler’s personal invitation to attend the conference, Lemieux described some of the problems faced by artists in Quebec. “For French-speaking Canadians there is a long list of issues that need to be addressed: the education of the public in matters of art, the preservation of traditional and folk art, exhibitions, propaganda, etc. This meeting will be extremely helpful, especially for those of us isolated in Quebec City and barely scraping a living behind our battlements.”<sup>6</sup> In conclusion, Lemieux suggested that Biéler should also approach Marius Plamondon (1914–1976), Omer Parent (1907–2000), Jean Palardy (1905–1991), and Alfred Pellan (1906–1988).

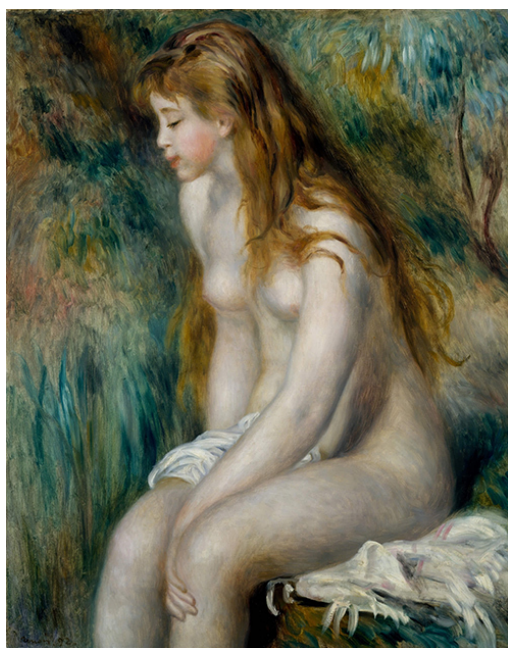
Despite the fact that Lemieux was not present at the Kingston conference, he was asked to join the national committee that was set up to ensure that its recommendations were implemented.<sup>7</sup> One of the proposals was to create a national art magazine, and in October 1943 *Maritime Art*, founded three years earlier, became *Canadian Art*.<sup>8</sup> Between 1942 and 1947 Lemieux contributed numerous articles about the current art scene in Quebec. The pan-Canadian activism in which he was a participant would lead to the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957.



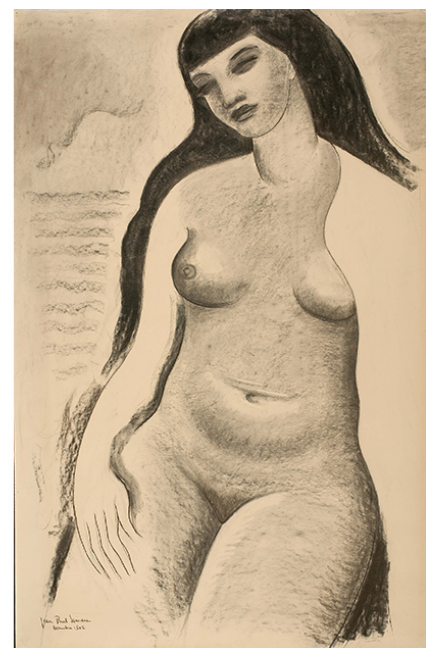
Leaders of the Federation of Canadian Artists at a meeting in Toronto in May 1942. From left to right: Arthur Lismer, Frances Loring, Lawren Harris, André Charles Biéler, and A.Y. Jackson.

### FRENCH HERITAGE

As an internationalist, Lemieux was open not only to America but also to the heritage of French art, whose importance he always upheld; Quebec artists had always looked to the School of Paris as the primary model of modernity in painting.<sup>9</sup> Lemieux often spoke of the Impressionists as the founders of modern art, though he also recognized that Impressionism drew on its predecessors in the best traditions of French painting. In an article published in 1938 he called Pierre-Auguste Renoir “the most charming if not the greatest of these painters.”<sup>10</sup> Lemieux considered



LEFT: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Young Girl Bathing*, 1892, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 64.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Nude*, 1942, black chalk on wove paper, 108.4 x 68.9 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.





Renoir the ultimate master of the female nude, and the French artist's influence is apparent in a charcoal drawing of a nude that Lemieux made in 1942, which is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

Even so, Lemieux was critical of the Impressionists' superficiality and their reliance on the charm of purely accidental effects created by colour and light. As indicated by the painting *The Promenade des Anglais in Nice* (*La promenade des anglais à Nice*), c. 1954-55, he was closer to the Post-Impressionists in spirit, especially Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), of whom he wrote that "his oeuvre consisted of an admirable series of groupings and structures, in forms that were analyzed by a very acute, very refined sensibility."<sup>11</sup> Lemieux never expressed any definite opinions about the more avant-garde members of the School of Paris, the descendants of the Cubists and the Fauves, preferring, as late as 1938, to say only that "the passage of time will sort the true from the false."<sup>12</sup> These scruples did not prevent him from subsequently passing judgment on Surrealism, calling it morbid and unhealthy, "symptomatic of a troubled era"; or on abstract art, "a degeneration of Cubism, the affectation of a decadent society."<sup>13</sup>



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Promenade des Anglais in Nice* (*La promenade des anglais à Nice*), c. 1954-55, oil on panel, 38 x 45 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City. Lemieux painted this scene while travelling in the south of France. There Lemieux developed an interest in the composition and textures in the work of Russian artist Nicolas de Staël, a member of the School of Paris before the war.



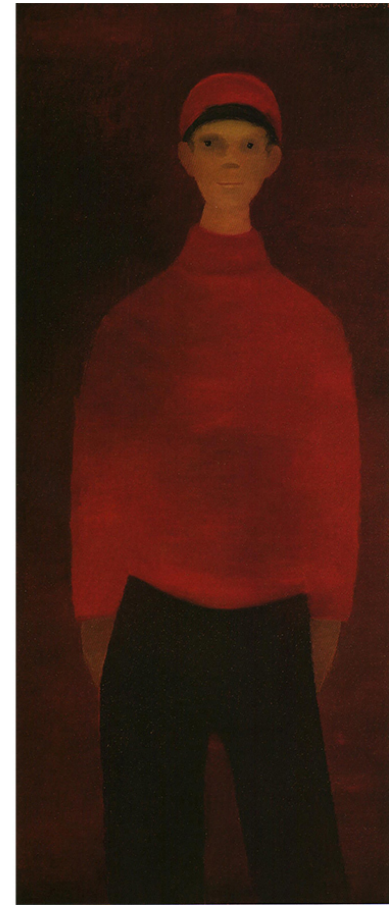
One of Lemieux's deepest beliefs was that a true work of art is emblematic of the historical era in which the artist lives. He recognized this value in the work of his compatriot Alfred Pellán (1906–1988), an avowed follower of the School of Paris. Pellán had lived in Paris since 1926 and knew Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), Fernand Léger (1881–1955), and Joan Miró (1893–1983). Lemieux was the first Quebec art critic to review Pellán's work; in two articles published in 1940,<sup>14</sup> the first in *Le Jour* in Montreal and the second some months later in *Le Temps* in Quebec City, Lemieux expressed great admiration for Pellán despite the disparity between his own figurative style and Pellán's abstract art.

In reply to a flurry of objections that were raised by partisans of an essentially regionalist French-

Canadian style of painting, Lemieux defended the universality of Pellán's work, asking, "Why confine art within these petty boundaries? A great painter represents his time. Whether he portrays his time in scenes of his native land or in still lifes makes little difference, as long as what he expresses on his canvases is dictated by his intelligence and his emotions."<sup>15</sup>

### THE FIGURATIVE VS. THE ABSTRACT

Lemieux's realm was the figurative, which meant he was out of step as an immense wave of abstraction rolled across North America between 1940 and 1950: the abstract and the nonfigurative became the most compelling areas of exploration in painting for artists who adopted Surrealism and automatic writing techniques, a move which led to geometric formalism and optical art. During these decades and the years that followed, Lemieux remained faithful to the figurative, as exquisitely demonstrated in *Mid-Lent Festival* (*Les mi-carêmes*), 1962, which depicts a mid-Lent festival whose participants seem to have come straight out of the *commedia dell'arte*, although he was by no means unaware of the excitement swirling all around him.



LEFT: Alfred Pellán, *Desire in the Light of the Moon* (*Désir au clair de la lune*), 1937, oil on canvas, 161.8 x 97.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Red Sweater* (*Le chandail rouge*), 1958, oil on canvas, 119.4 x 52 cm, Hart House, University of Toronto. In 1936 Pellán returned to his hometown of Quebec City with hopes of being hired by the École des beaux-arts de Québec, but his work was deemed "too modern." The school preferred Lemieux, whom they hired in 1937.





Jean Paul Lemieux, *Mid-Lent Festival (Les mi-carêmes)*, 1962, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 137.2 cm, the Andrée Rhéaume Fitzhenry and Robert Fitzhenry Collection. This painting depicts a group celebrating the mid-Lent festival, an occasion on which people dress in colourful costumes and visit neighbours, who try to guess their identity.

Lemieux was one of the first critics to define the word “abstraction” in the French-Canadian press.<sup>16</sup> He conceived abstract art as the sophisticated expression of a society in decline. In his eyes, the work of his contemporaries illustrated the stressed, mechanistic quality of the time they were living through and the frightening future it portended. “An anxious era will not produce tranquil art. Painting today is in transition. It is tormented, disturbed, and seeking, like contemporary humanity, new modes of expression.”<sup>17</sup>

However, his reaction to the work of his contemporaries was disappointment and bitterness, and his desire for independence only grew stronger throughout his career. He had worked for an opening up of art toward the universal, and for liberation from the rigidity of academicism, but, as he explained, “The liberation I welcomed with so much enthusiasm very quickly turned into the worst kind of slavery. In the heyday of Père Couturier, it seemed everyone was more royalist than the king. Figurative



Paul-Émile Borduas, *Untitled*, 1954, watercolour on wove paper, 12.5 x 20.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. In this watercolour Borduas used a drip technique he developed in response to the work of Jackson Pollock.



painting was tolerated, but with strict reservations: it had to look like [Pierre] Bonnard, [Chaïm] Soutine or [Georges] Rouault. Within the space of a few years, I could even say a few months, we had our Fauves, our Surrealists, our Abstractionists, and our Expressionists. Never before was there a time of such servile imitateness in our art.”<sup>18</sup>

Lemieux never spoke publicly about the painting of Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960), or the Refus global manifesto of 1948. If his silence left anyone in doubt about his opinion of the Automatistes and their revolution, his position became quite clear in 1954 on the occasion of an exhibition called *La matière chante* at the Galerie Antoine in Montreal. Lemieux, alias Paul Blouyn, and his student Edmund Alleyn (1931–2004) created a controversy by submitting, as a prank, some nonfigurative works they had painted using “the automatist method.” Their work was accepted for the exhibition by Borduas, who had come from New York specifically to select the paintings that were to be hung. The hoax deepened the rivalry between Quebec City and Montreal, which at that time were briefly on opposite sides in the question of figurative versus abstract art.

### SPACE AND TIME

This artistic and critical rivalry in Quebec in the mid-1950s was happening just when Lemieux’s painting was undergoing a transformation. With works such as *The Evening Visitor* (*Le visiteur du soir*), 1956, and *Julie and the Universe* (*Julie et l’univers*), 1965, he turned away from narrative to concentrate on the flat space of the picture plane, maximizing its suggestive power with balanced and radically simplified combinations of form and colour. He looked deep into his past to find again the happiness of childhood; he exalted nature in pure, horizontal compositions; and he expressed the perilous human condition by showing figures isolated in their personal solitude.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Julie and the Universe* (*Julie et l’univers*), 1965, oil on canvas, 104 x 142.5 cm, collection Pierre Lassonde.

The critic and medical doctor Paul Dumas (1928–2005), rather than marginalizing these works of Lemieux’s classic period (1956–1970) by simply emphasizing their opposition to the prevailing nonfigurative style of the time, explains that Lemieux’s “daring arrangements on the canvas, his rigorous composition, the subtlety of colour and accuracy of tones, his poetic intensity and the contained emotion, so powerfully conveyed, establish his work on a

level of equality with the most prestigious nonfigurative art."<sup>19</sup> The artist himself did not go quite that far in finding a resemblance. He commented, "Certainly, colour or line can sometimes create a specific emotion without necessarily defining a subject. But it's also clear that when identifiable subjects are abandoned, painting has a tendency to lose its way and fall into decorativism. From there it's just one small step to being nothing but technique. There has to be mystery in a painting."<sup>20</sup>

Space and time—past, present, and future—fundamentally preoccupied Lemieux throughout his long career and this is reflected in early notebook drawings and sketches, such as *Funeral*, c. 1916–28, and *Melancholy*, 1938. "I'm haunted most of all by the dimension of time! Space and time! Time flowing; man within space, watching time flow away."<sup>21</sup> *Self-portrait (Autoportrait)*, painted in 1974, is charged with meaning, constructed as a *mise en abîme* showing the stages of his life as a man and an artist. Lemieux's late Expressionist period (1970–1990) would be dominated by great universal themes: the destructive power of war, the threatening modern city, and humanity's obsession with death.



LEFT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Funeral*, c. 1916–28, black ink and graphite on wove paper, 12.7 x 20.2 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Melancholy*, c. 1932, ink, graphite, and gouache on wove paper, 25.2 x 20.2 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa





# STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Jean Paul Lemieux was an affectionate and acute observer of his country. Living through most of the twentieth century, he amassed a rich trove of influences from Europe, the United States, and Canada. In his work as a draftsman, painter, illustrator, and muralist, he forged a distinctive artistic personality that, beginning in 1956, brought him international recognition. His contribution to the history of art takes him beyond Canada's borders and places him in the ranks of the great Nordic Expressionists.

## EARLY INFLUENCES

For Lemieux, the acknowledgement of one's influences is essential to the development of an original artistic personality. His taste was eclectic and very definite, and he felt affinities with numerous painters. Like many of his generation he owed his first awareness of international currents in art to the New York magazine *Vanity Fair*, which under the auspices of its editor Frank Crowninshield (1872-1947) brought together famous illustrators, writers, painters, and photographers in a series of separate colour supplements devoted to the leading creators of modern art.

But Lemieux's first direct influences were Canadian: the Group of Seven, and in particular Edwin Holgate (1892-1977), who joined the group in 1930. These painters sought to convey the emotions inspired in them by Canada's natural beauty, and allied themselves with late-nineteenth-century European Symbolists and Post-Impressionists such as Edvard Munch (1863-1944), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), and Émile Bernard (1868-1941). Lemieux's *Afternoon Sunlight (Soleil d'après-midi)*, 1933, is imbued with the expressive force they aimed for, rejecting the kind of naturalism that seeks only to replicate nature. Lemieux also admired the work of Goodridge Roberts (1904-1974), whose influence can be seen in the muted, earthy poetry of *Landscape, Eastern Townships (Paysage des Cantons-de-l'Est)*, 1936, a composition that recalls the deliberate, measured side of Paul Cézanne (1839-1906).



**LEFT:** Jean Paul Lemieux, *Landscape, Eastern Townships (Paysage des Cantons-de-l'Est)*, 1936, oil on plywood, 56 x 75.6 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. **RIGHT:** Goodridge Roberts, *Hillside, Lake Alphonse*, 1942, oil on canvas, 48.5 x 74 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario

Lemieux's interest in American Social Realism is evident in *The Village Meeting (L'assemblée)*, 1936, which depicts a municipal gathering in a rural environment and pushes realism to the point of caricature. He uses all the traditional details: calendar, spittoon, devotional images on the walls, the austere dark cross of the famous temperance movement and the portrait of its founder. The painting implies enough ridicule and sarcasm to raise the same questions as those asked about the works of Grant Wood (1891-1942), Ben Shahn (1898-1969), Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), or John Curry (1897-1946): is it meant to celebrate the traditional scene, or to mock it—or even condemn it?





Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Village Meeting (L'assemblée)*, 1936, oil on canvas, 86.5 x 111.5 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

### PRIMITIVISM

The paintings he made in his narrative primitivist period (1940-1946) are Lemieux's often humorous way of reacting to the moral rigidity prevalent in Quebec at this time. Using vivid contrasting colours and precise drawing to capture even the smallest detail, Lemieux tackled the superstitions of the French-Canadian people and the power of the Catholic clergy. *The Disciples of Emmaus (Les disciples d'Emmaüs)*, 1940, *Lazarus (Lazare)*, 1941, *Our Lady Protecting Quebec City (Notre Dame protégeant Québec)*, 1942, and *Corpus Christi, Quebec City (La Fête-Dieu à Québec)*, 1944, link the ordinary details of daily life to events of greater significance and a more complex reality.

Variations on the theme of religion, these works draw their visual inspiration from the tradition of the ex-voto offering, the Holy Scriptures, or the Catholic liturgical calendar. Formally, they share a pyramidal construction set within a vertical frame. The high- or low-angle perspective orients the viewer's eye along a winding path from the bottom to the top of each composition.

In the preparatory sketch for *The Disciples of Emmaus*, executed in gouache, we can still see the lines Lemieux drew to facilitate scaling up the image to a larger format on canvas. In the finished painting, the scene could be interpreted as a delicious bit of irreverence: the artist has obscured the sacred character of the biblical story of the evangelist Luke by placing it in a setting of everyday activities in a Laurentian village. For the meaning of this work to be clear, it has to be seen in the context of the renewal of religious art that took place in Quebec during this time. This was a movement to integrate the sacred into ordinary life. The primitive art of Giotto (1266/67–1337), for instance, was offered as a model of that integration; the goal was to create works of art that would democratize the evangelical message by including images drawn from the contemporary world or from life in the countryside.<sup>1</sup>



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Study for "The Disciples of Emmaus"* (*Étude pour "Les disciples d'Emmaüs"*), 1940, gouache and pencil on paper, 25.4 x 20 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. Faithful to the final painting, this preliminary drawing depicts a scene from the Gospel of Luke in which, following his resurrection, Christ appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and then ate supper with them.

## CLASSIC PERIOD

A slow process of germination between 1945 and 1950 led to the blossoming of style that would make Lemieux famous. His classic period lasted from 1956 until 1970. The "synthetist" art of the Nabis, inspired by Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) and by the proto-Cubism of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), formed the basis of his new aesthetic identity.

Lemieux had not forgotten the Gauguin paintings that impressed him in Boston in 1930; they had made him aware of art's immense symbolic power. In this respect a work like *The Ursuline Nuns* (*Les Ursulines*), 1951, shows that his concept of the primary aim of art was similar to that of the Symbolist Maurice Denis (1870–1943):

"Remember that a picture, before it is a warhorse or a nude woman or a particular anecdote, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours arranged in a certain order."<sup>2</sup> In *The Ursuline Nuns* Lemieux follows Cézanne in the use of cavalier perspective, a technique he had begun to work with in the preceding period.



LEFT: Maurice Denis, *Springtime*, c. 1894–99, oil on canvas, 80.6 x 97.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. RIGHT: Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Ursuline Nuns* (*Les Ursulines*), 1951, oil on canvas, 61 x 76 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.



Empty spaces and a bare horizon line crossing a plastic, flat field were among the key features of Lemieux's classic period, such as in *The Conversation* (*La conversation*), 1968. This purification of imagery would develop further as the painter began to compose pictures using long diagonals, creating an unstable



equilibrium. His deserted landscapes, most frequently staged in the winter, are charged with feelings of time passing, of death, of the human condition, and of the loneliness and smallness of human beings before the infinite horizons of the vast landscapes of Canada.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Conversation (La conversation)*, 1968, oil on canvas, 104 x 170.2 cm, private collection.

His palette was now limited to just a few pigments: olive green, white, shades of ochre, earth colours, and red. Blue is entirely absent because, the painter said, it seemed to disturb the balance. He preferred to approximate it using only white, black, and small amounts of green.<sup>3</sup> More a valorist<sup>4</sup> than a colourist, Lemieux used subdued, in-between shades that accorded with the meditative nature of these canvases. The softened tones parallel the evocation of memory, and the monochrome or oligochrome (reduced) palettes add to the effect of immensity created by the horizontal format, and sometimes intensify it, as in *A Day in the Country (Une journée à la campagne)*, 1967, a painting that belonged to Lemieux's friend, the novelist Gabrielle Roy.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *A Day in the Country (Une journée à la campagne)*, 1967, oil on canvas, 20 x 178.3 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. This painting was owned by author Gabrielle Roy, whose portrait Lemieux painted in 1953.

For a long time Lemieux had painted *sur le motif*: directly and immediately from nature, often outdoors, but from the end of the 1950s on he worked in his studio, without models, using only daylight for illumination. "I am painting ... an interior world. I have stored up a lot of things."<sup>5</sup> His free approach was in

many ways similar to the practice of abstract painters: "You are guided by the picture much more often than you guide it. And that can lead to results completely unlike what you may have intended or planned."<sup>6</sup>

The cinema is no stranger to Lemieux's art. The revelation of Hollywood movies experienced by the young adolescent Lemieux, who lived with his mother and siblings in California, can be seen in the later bold framing and panoramic effects of the mature artist. In *Ocean Wind*, 1963, for example, blue is heightened to such an extent that it creates the illusion of a vast screen in which the eye loses itself.<sup>7</sup> The horizontal action of the blowing wind has a cinematic effect, like a long tracking shot that moves from left to right. The fragile feminine figure walking into the wind is a true point of pictorial tension.



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Ocean Wind (Vent de mer)*, 1963, oil on canvas, 71 x 109 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

### NORDIC EXPRESSIONISM

During the last twenty years of his life, in what is referred to as his Expressionist period (1970–1990), Lemieux's painting conveyed his dark, tragic vision of the tormented historical era he was living through. He had decried the appearance, several decades before, of a troubled art generated by disturbed times, speaking at that time of Cubism, abstract art, and Surrealism. His kinship with the Nordic Expressionists now began to dominate his work as he studied and emulated Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980), Georges Rouault (1871–1958), and even Ivan Albright (1897–1983), the American magic realist painter, whom he found very impressive.



In 1971 Lemieux returned to drawing in graphite, pen and ink, and felt pen, which he had not done so intensely since the 1940s. He also uses oil wash, looking to regain lightness and spontaneity in his pictorial studies, and also to keep a record of his apocalyptic visions. One such record is the notebook of drawings he titled *Year 2082*, 1972. It was around this time too that he returned to illustrating books, something he had done in his student years. His illustrations for *La pension Leblanc* by Robert Choquette (1927) and *Le manoir hanté* by Régis Roy (1928) were reminiscent of woodcuts or lino prints, with their black forms sharply defined against the white paper, and the staccato rhythms of the linear elements texturing the compositions with shadow and light. Four decades on, to illustrate *La petite poule d'eau* by Gabrielle Roy, he made lithographic prints of some twenty small pictures inspired by the novel. He made similar engravings for *Jean Paul Lemieux retrouve Maria Chapdelaine* (1987) and *Canada-Canada* (1984-85).



**LEFT:** Jean Paul Lemieux, *Ericson Exploring a Montreal Street*, 1972, oil paint, graphite, and felt pen on wove paper, 22.5 x 30 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. His imagining of a post-apocalyptic Montreal, this is one of five drawings from a sketchbook that Lemieux inscribed, "Sketches taken during an expedition to the Poisoned Lands of Northern America in the year 2082." **RIGHT:** Jean Paul Lemieux, *Lake Moorhen (Le Lac de la Grande Poule d'eau)*, 1971, lithographic offset. Lemieux made this illustration to accompany Gabrielle Roy's *La petite poule d'eau*, published in 1950.

In the 1970s the contemplative serenity of the landscapes in oil that Lemieux had painted in the previous decade gave way to canvases in which dark, dense masses cover almost the entire picture plane. Playing with tonal contrasts, these works make use of red, black, and blue backgrounds for the human characters, who face front, their expressions conveying sadness, pain, fear, or anguish. "The essential element in my last paintings is the person," Lemieux explains. "The landscape is his setting. If you could have a world without human beings, the landscape would be the same. But the presence of man changes everything. It is the place of the human within the universe that matters. The person finds his footing, finds himself, in the landscape."<sup>8</sup>



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Untitled (Soldier)* (*Sans titre [Soldat]*), 1982, oil on canvas, 40.6 x 50.8 cm, private collection.





## WHERE TO SEE

The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, houses the most comprehensive collection of works by Jean Paul Lemieux. Other important galleries, museums, and private collections in Canada also hold his work. Documentary sources and photographic records of the artist's work are available for consultation at the National Gallery of Canada and at Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. Lemieux's works are not on public view at all times in these institutions, with the exception of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, where a permanent exhibition space was dedicated to him in 2014; there visitors can view works from each of the most important stages of his artistic career.

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## ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
1-877-225-4246 or 416-979-6648  
ago.net



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Lazarus*  
(*Lazare*), 1941**  
Oil on Masonite  
101 x 83.5 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *January in*  
*Quebec City (Janvier à Québec)*,  
1965**  
Oil on canvas  
106.4 x 151.5 cm

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## CONFEDERATION CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

145 Richmond Street  
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada  
902-628-1864  
confederationcentre.com



**Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Charlottetown Revisited*  
(*Charlottetown revisitée*), 1964**  
Oil on canvas  
197.2 x 380 cm

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## HART HOUSE

University of Toronto  
7 Hart House Circle  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
416-978-8398  
[harthouse.ca/justina-m-barnicke-gallery](http://harthouse.ca/justina-m-barnicke-gallery)



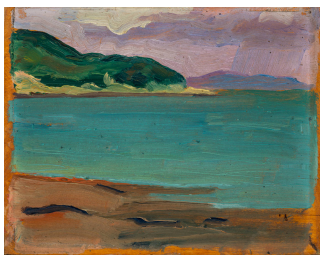
**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Red Sweater (Le chandail rouge)*, 1958**

Oil on canvas  
119.4 x 52 cm

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## JEAN-NOËL DESMARAIS PAVILION OF THE MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1380 Sherbrooke Street West  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
514-285-2000  
[mbam.qc.ca/en](http://mbam.qc.ca/en)



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Seascape, Bay St. Paul (Marine, Baie-Saint-Paul)*, 1935**

Oil on board  
13.8 x 17.5 cm

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**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Far West (Le Far West)*, 1955**

Oil on canvas  
55.7 x 132.2 cm

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**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Dies Irae*, 1982-83**

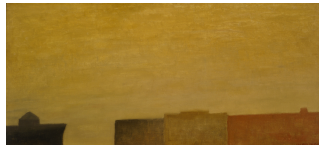
Oil on canvas  
135.4 x 309 cm

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## MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

185 Sainte-Catherine Street West  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
514-847-6226  
[macm.org/en](http://macm.org/en)



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Summer in Montreal (L'été à Montréal)*, 1959**

Oil on canvas  
57.5 x 126.5 cm

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## MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC

National Battlefields Park  
Quebec City, Quebec, Canada  
1-866-220-2150 or 418-643-2150  
[mnbaq.org/en](http://mnbaq.org/en)



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Afternoon Sunlight (Soleil d'après-midi)*, 1933**

Oil on canvas  
76.7 x 86.7 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Landscape, Eastern Townships (Paysage des Cantons-de-l'Est)*, 1936**

Oil on plywood  
56 x 75.6 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Village Meeting (L'assemblée)*, 1936**

Oil on canvas  
86.5 x 111.5 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Those Beautiful Days (Les beaux jours)*, 1937**

Oil on plywood  
63.6 x 53.5 cm

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Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Portrait of the Artist at  
Beauport-Est (Portrait  
de l'artiste à Beauport-  
Est)*, 1943

Oil on panel  
63.5 x 106.6 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Corpus Christi, Quebec  
City (La Fête-Dieu à  
Québec)*, 1944

Oil on canvas  
152.7 x 122 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The  
Ursuline Nuns (Les  
Ursulines)*, 1951

Oil on canvas  
61 x 76 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Study for "The Ursuline  
Nuns" (Étude pour "Les  
Ursulines")*, 1951

Oil on plywood  
20.1 x 25.5 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The  
Promenade des Anglais  
in Nice (La promenade  
des Anglais à Nice)*,  
c. 1954-55

Oil on panel  
38 x 45 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Death on a Clear  
Morning (La mort par  
un clair matin)*, 1963

Oil on canvas  
106 x 78.5 cm



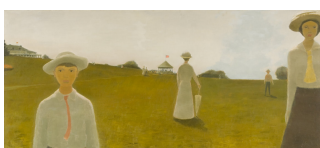
Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Ocean Wind (Vent de  
mer)*, 1963

Oil on canvas  
71 x 109 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Snow-covered City  
(Ville enneigée)*, 1963

Oil on canvas  
87.5 x 142 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Summer of 1914 (L'été  
de 1914)*, 1965

Oil on canvas  
79.2 x 175.5 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux, *A  
Day in the Country (Une  
journée à la  
campagne)*, 1967

Oil on canvas  
20 x 178.3 cm



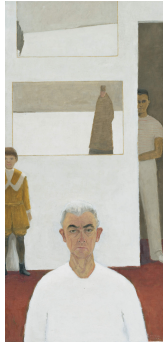
Jean Paul Lemieux,  
*Quebec City Is Burning  
(Québec brûle)*, 1967

Oil on canvas  
53.5 x 178 cm



Jean Paul Lemieux, *The  
Express (Le rapide)*,  
1968

Oil on canvas  
101 x 204 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Self-portrait (Autoportrait)*, 1974**

Oil on canvas  
167 x 79 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *Turned Towards the Cosmos (Tourné vers le cosmos)*, c. 1980-85**

Oil on canvas  
135 x 70.5 cm

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## NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-990-1985  
gallery.ca



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Evening Visitor (Le visiteur du soir)*, 1956**

Oil on canvas  
80.4 x 110 cm



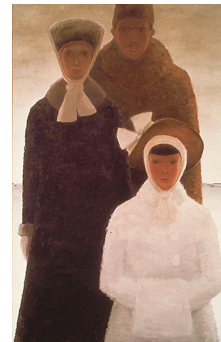
**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Noon Train (Le train de midi)*, 1956**

Oil on canvas  
63 x 110.5 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Orphan (L'orpheline)*, 1956**

Oil on canvas  
60.9 x 45.6 cm



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Visit*, 1967**

Oil on canvas  
170 x 107.3 cm

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## WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

300 Memorial Boulevard  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
204-786-6641  
wag.ca



**Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Fates*  
(*Les Parques*), 1962**

Oil on canvas  
71.1 x 110.5 cm

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## NOTES

## BIOGRAPHY

1. The painter's signature on his work is always "Jean Paul Lemieux," with no hyphen. He preferred that spelling, although in most of the articles he wrote, as well as those published about him, his given name appears with a hyphen.

2. This Montreal company was headed by Edward Black Greenshields, a well-known businessman who was also an art critic and collector. Along with several other notable Montreal citizens, including Sir William Van Horne and Lord Strathcona, he was on the Board of Directors of the Art Association of Montreal (today the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).

3. Edward-P. Lawson, "Jean-Paul Lemieux raconte sa jeunesse," *La Presse* (Montreal), September 15, 1967, 12.

4. It is possible that Lemieux's memory of the painter's name was faulty, or that the journalist who transcribed his conversation made a mistake. According to art historian Laurier Lacroix, this influential figure may have been Howard Hall Darnell (1858-1939), who painted landscapes in many parts of the United States, including the East Coast.

5. "Ce que sera l'enseignement à l'École des Beaux-Arts," *Le Canada* (Montreal), October 15, 1923.

6. Jean Paul Lemieux, "Notes sur le dessin (Notes on Drawing)," *Regards*, March 6, 1942, 278.

7. Emmanuel Fougerat quoted in "L'Exposition d'art français," *Le Soleil* (Quebec City), March 25, 1924.

8. Featured here is a photo of students at the École, with Lemieux in the bottom left corner. Mentioned in brackets are the fields in which these students would later become known. *From left, top row*: unknown, Léopold Dufresne (painter), Armand Filion (sculptor), unknown, Pierre-Aimé Normandeau (sculptor/ceramicist), unknown, unknown, unknown, Marjorie Smith (painter), Jean Savard (architect), Maurice Cullen (painter), unknown, Roland H. Charlebois (painter), Francesco Iacurto (painter), Simone Dénéchaud (painter), Gauthier (painter), Gilles Beauregard Champagne (goldsmith), unknown, Jean-Charles Faucher (painter), Irène Senécal (painter); *middle row*: Sylvia Daoust (sculptor), unknown, unknown, unknown, Alfred Laliberté (painter/sculptor), unknown, unknown, Charles Maillard (director), Henri Mercier (architect); *bottom row*: Jean Paul Lemieux, unknown, Aline Gauthier-Charlevoix, unknown, unknown, Anne-Marie Gendron (painter), Lili Maillard, Gaétane Tessier, Madeleine Des Rosiers, Jeannette Meunier (later Jeannette Biéler). Photo taken in Maurice Cullen's house in June 1929.

9. Edward-P. Lawson, "Jean-Paul Lemieux raconte sa jeunesse," *La Presse* (Montreal), September 15, 1967, 12.



10. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted by Gilles Corbeil, "Jean-Paul Lemieux, peintre intimiste," *Arts et pensée* (Montreal), November-December 1953: 39.

11. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 133.

12. Jean Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la Peinture Contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.

13. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts did not buy a Lemieux until 1959; the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa had acquired its first one in 1956. The Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario), however, first acquired a Lemieux in 1941.

14. Marius Barbeau, *Painters of Quebec* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946), 37.

15. Exhibition organized by Bartlett Hayes Jr. at the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover (Massachusetts). Following its presentation in Andover (September 18-November 8, 1942), the exhibition is shown in Northampton (Massachusetts), Washington D.C., Detroit (Michigan), Baltimore (Maryland), San Francisco (California), Portland (Oregon), Seattle (Washington), and Toledo (Ohio) before having its Canadian premiere from January 20-February 7, 1944, at the National Gallery of Canada. The work's title is given as *Council* (*Conseil*) in the exhibition catalogue.

16. Gilles Corbeil, "Jean-Paul Lemieux, peintre intimiste," *Arts et pensée* (Montreal), November-December 1953: 39.

17. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in "Paroles du peintre," *Le Soleil* (Quebec City), June 29, 1974.

18. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 109.

19. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 178.

#### KEY WORKS: LAZARUS

1. "No other method and technique than that of primitive or folk imagery could be more appropriate and fruitful. The spirit and naïveté of those images furnish a clue to much of Lemieux's later work as a painter. Under a peculiar light Lemieux looks at the people, in town, convent or country, and exposes their activities and strivings. When down the river he spends a summer vacation, he responds to the good humour of the pioneers in the midst of stumps and poverty; he catches them on the fling, as it were, posing for him in the manner of bourgeois, whose daguerreotypes fill a family album." Marius Barbeau, *Painters of Quebec* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1946), 36 and 38.

**KEY WORKS: THE EVENING VISITOR**

1. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 111.
2. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Jean O'Neil, "Ce qui me hante le plus c'est la dimension du temps," *La Presse* (Montreal), April 13, 1963, supplement, 3.
3. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Marie Carani, *Jean Paul Lemieux* (Quebec: Musée du Québec/Les publications du Québec, 1992), 123.

**KEY WORKS: SUMMER IN MONTREAL**

1. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la peinture contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.
2. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 122.

**KEY WORKS: 1910 REMEMBERED**

1. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Jean Paul Lemieux, la poétique de la souvenance* (Quebec City: Éditions Garneau, 1968), 10.

**KEY WORKS: JULIE AND THE UNIVERSE**

1. Songwriter Jean Lapointe was also a collector who felt a strong kinship with Jean Paul Lemieux's work.

2. Il a fait des personnages  
Qui se cherchent sans se trouver  
Des inconnus sans visages  
Qui rêvent de se parler  
Ils ont sûrement trop d'espace  
Pour pouvoir se rencontrer  
Et je crois que le temps qui passe  
Les a bien trop éloignés

Dans un grand pays de neige  
On les a vus ce matin  
Former le plus beau cortège  
Pour prendre le même train  
Car ils s'en vont à la fête  
Pour Julie et l'univers  
Des souvenirs plein la tête  
D'un temps où tout était clair

- "1910 Remembered"

**KEY WORKS: THE EXPRESS**

1. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 178.



**KEY WORKS: THE AFTERMATH/LA VILLE DÉTRUITE**

1. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Quebec," *Canadian Art*, February–March 1944, 121.
2. Jean Paul Lemieux in Guy Robert, *Lemieux* (Montreal: Éditions Stanké, 1975), 256.

**SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES**

1. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Réflexions sur l'Art," *L'Événement-Journal* (Quebec City), December 17, 1938, supplement, 18.
2. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "La peinture chez les Canadiens français," *Le Jour* (Montreal), July 16, 1938, 3.
3. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "La peinture chez les Canadiens français," *Le Jour* (Montreal), July 16, 1938, 3.
4. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "La peinture chez les Canadiens français," *Le Jour* (Montreal), July 16, 1938, 3.
5. For more information about this conference, see Hélène Sicotte, "À Kingston, il y a 50 ans, la Conférence des artistes canadiens. Débat sur la place de l'artiste dans la société," *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien/Journal of Canadian Art History* 14, no. 2 (1991): 28–48.
6. Handwritten letter signed Jean Paul Lemieux, addressed to André Biéler, St. Louis de Courville, February 23, 1941. It is worth noting that three people from Quebec City attended the conference, including Paul Rainville, curator of the Musée de la province de Québec. Lemieux, on the other hand, did not attend. (Handwritten letter signed Jean Paul Lemieux, addressed to André Biéler, Saint-Louis-de-Courville, Montmorency, July 26, 1941.)
7. Formally elected members were André Biéler, Walter Abell, A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, and Frances Loring.
8. Under the editorship of Paul Arthur and Bary Lord, *Canadian Art* was renamed *artscanada* in 1967. The Society for Art Publications published *artscanada* until 1984, when its name reverted to *Canadian Art* and ownership changed to Key Publications and Maclean Hunter. In 1991 the magazine was granted non-profit status and soon after the Canadian Art Foundation was formed, subsuming the magazine under the umbrella of its operations.
9. See Esther Trépanier, "La critique d'art moderne des années 1930: les francophones," in *Peinture et modernité au Québec, 1919–1939* (Montreal: Éditions Nota Bene, 1998), 88–93.
10. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la Peinture Contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.
11. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la Peinture Contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.

12. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la Peinture Contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.

13. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la Peinture Contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.

14. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Notes sur quelques toiles de Pellan," *Le Jour* (Montreal), May 14, 1938, 3; Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Pellan, peintre de l'abstraction, créateur de symboles," *Le Temps* (Quebec), November 8, 1940, 5.

15. These lines, written by Lemieux in 1938, prefigure the explosion of excitement sparked by Alfred Pellan's return, in 1940, after fourteen years in Paris. To mark the importance of this homecoming the Musée de la province de Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec) dedicated a major exhibition to Pellan, a cultural event now seen as the decisive break between the art of the past and a new, vital art in Quebec. See Michèle Grandbois, "Alfred Pellan: 12 juin 1940, soirée de vernissage au Musée de la province ou la révolution Pellan," *Québec, une ville et ses artistes*, (Quebec: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2008), 268-84. Exhibition catalogue.

16. François-Marc Gagnon, "Le sens du mot 'abstraction' dans la critique d'art et les déclarations de peintres des années quarante au Québec," in *L'avènement de la modernité culturelle au Québec*, ed. Yvan Lamonde and Esther Trepanier (Quebec City: Institut québécois de la recherche sur la culture, 1986), 115.

17. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Aperçu sur la peinture contemporaine," *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.

18. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Gilles Corbeil, "Jean-Paul Lemieux. Peintre intimiste," *Arts et pensée* (Montreal), November-December 1953: 39.

19. Paul Dumas, "Rencontre avec Jean-Paul Lemieux," *L'Information médicale et paramédicale*, June 17, 1969, 41.

20. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Lyse Nantais, "Rencontre avec Jean-Paul Lemieux," *Le Devoir* (Montreal), January 28, 1961, 12.

21. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Jean O'Neil, "Ce qui me hante le plus c'est la dimension du temps," *La Presse* (Montreal), April 13, 1963, supplement, 2-3.

## STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. Between 1930 and 1965 the painters, sculptors, decorators, and artisans of Quebec, especially those who had studied in Paris at Maurice Denis's Ateliers d'Art Sacré, or with his former student Père Couturier (an artist and theoretician who lived in Quebec during the Second World War), were keenly interested in the idea of new parameters for religious art.



2. Maurice Denis, "Définition du néo-traditionnisme," *Art et critique* 23-30 (August 1890); reprinted in Maurice Denis, *Théories, 1890-1910: Du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Occident, 1912). The fourth and last edition of the book was published by Rouart et Watelin, Paris, 1920.
3. Paul Dumas, "Rencontre avec Jean-Paul Lemieux," *L'Information médicale et paramédicale*, June 17, 1969, 40.
4. A painter is a valorist rather than a colourist if he or she relies on the effect of chromatic values rather than pure colour. The value referred to is the degree of luminosity, from dark to light, independent of its hue. It is expressed in higher or lower contrasts of tones or shades that vary in intensity and in different degrees of density. Rembrandt and Corot are valorists; Renoir and Matisse are colourists. The term was used by Lemieux, but it is not in common usage.
5. Claude Jasmin, "Le monde calme et inquiétant de Jean-Paul Lemieux," *La Presse* (Montreal), February 6, 1965, 18-19.
6. Jean-Paul Lemieux, "Jean-Paul Lemieux ne sait jamais où une toile doit le conduire," *L'Action* (Quebec City), September 18, 1967, 9.
7. "It's my palette that gives me my colours," he says, "and I don't like blue. I can remember any sky but a blue sky. But in one of my new works I have tried a blue sky. It's quite unusual for me." Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Patrick Nagle, "Timeless Painter from Quebec," *Weekend Magazine*, March 16, 1963, 19.
8. Jean Paul Lemieux quoted in Lise Nantais, "Hommage à Jean Paul Lemieux," *Le médecin du Québec*, August 1986, 80.

## GLOSSARY

### **abstract art**

Visual art that uses form, colour, line, and gestural marks in compositions that do not attempt to represent images of real things. Abstract art may interpret reality in an altered form, or depart from it entirely. Also called nonfigurative or nonrepresentational art.

### **Albright, Ivan (American, 1897–1983)**

A Chicago painter of haunting and meticulously constructed portraits and still lifes. His most famous works—among them his earliest monumental painting, *Into the World There Came a Soul Named Ida*, 1929–30—convey his lifelong concern with the idea of mortality. Albright also wrote and worked in sculpture, lithography, and film.

### **Alleyn, Edmund (Canadian, 1931–2004)**

An innovative and cerebral painter who engaged with numerous major styles throughout his life, from Abstract Expressionism to Pop Art. Alleyn trained at the École des beaux-arts de Québec, in Quebec City (now part of Université Laval), with Jean Paul Lemieux before moving to Paris in 1955, where he lived for fifteen years. He represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 1960.

### **Art Association of Montreal (AAM)**

Founded in 1860 as an offshoot of the Montreal Society of Artists (itself dating to 1847), the Art Association of Montreal became the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1947. The MMFA is now a major international museum, with more than 760,000 visitors annually.

### **Arts Club of Montreal**

Founded in 1912 by a group of successful artists, sculptors, architects, and writers of high social status and modelled on the English gentlemen's clubs of London in the nineteenth century. Notable members were architect William Maxwell Sutherland (founder and first president); painter and professor of art history, William Brymner; Maurice Cullen; A.Y. Jackson; Henri Hébert; Alfred Laliberté; and James Wilson Morrice. In 1996 the membership was opened to women. The club is now a professional association representing a wide range of artists.

### **Ashcan School**

A group of New York-based American painters—principally George Bellows, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Edward Hopper, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and John French Sloan—active from around 1908 to the First World War, interested in depicting scenes of daily urban life, including slum life and marginalized populations.

### **automatism**

A physiological term first applied to art by the Surrealists to refer to processes such as free association and spontaneous, intuitive writing, drawing, and painting that allow access to the subconscious without the interference of planning or controlled thought.



**Automatistes**

A Montreal-based artists' group interested in Surrealism and the Surrealist technique of automatism. Centred on the artist, teacher, and theorist Paul-Émile Borduas, the Automatistes exhibited regularly between 1946 and 1954, making Montreal a locus of mid-century avant-garde art. Members included Marcel Barbeau, Marcelle Ferron, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Fernand Leduc, and Françoise Sullivan.

**Barbeau, Marius (Canadian, 1883–1969)**

A pioneering anthropologist and ethnologist, Barbeau is considered the founder of folklore studies in Canada. Based at the National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, he studied French-Canadian and Indigenous communities, collecting songs, legends, and art, and documenting customs and social organization. His interests led him to work with several artists, including Emily Carr, A.Y. Jackson, and Jean Paul Lemieux.

**Benton, Thomas Hart (American, 1889–1975)**

A painter, lithographer, and illustrator who believed strongly in art's social function. Initially interested in abstraction, Benton soon rejected apolitical modernism, becoming a committed Regionalist and sought-after muralist. His monumental political narratives adorned numerous public and private buildings in his native Missouri, as well as in New York and Chicago.

**Biéler, André (Swiss/Canadian, 1896–1989)**

An important figure in Canadian art history for his arts activism (which contributed to the eventual founding of the Canada Council for the Arts), teaching, and prolific creative output. His paintings, murals, prints, and sculptures fuse a modernist concern for form, line, and colour with regionalist subjects: rural landscapes, figures, and genre scenes.

**Bonnard, Pierre (French, 1867–1947)**

A painter and printmaker associated with the Nabis, a group of French Post-Impressionist artists who emerged in the late 1880s and maintained a distance from the Parisian avant-garde. Bonnard often worked in a decorative mode and with an Impressionist use of colour; he painted interior scenes and landscapes, created posters and theatre sets, and designed household objects.

**Borduas, Paul-Émile (Canadian, 1905–1960)**

The leader of the avant-garde Automatistes and one of Canada's most important modern artists. Borduas was also an influential advocate for reform in Quebec, calling for liberation from religious and narrow nationalist values in the 1948 manifesto *Refus global*. (See *Paul-Émile Borduas: Life & Work* by François-Marc Gagnon.)

**Brandtner, Fritz (German, 1896–1969)**

A prolific and influential visual artist in Canada, Brandtner immigrated to this country in 1928 and quickly established himself as a commercial artist and set designer; he also mounted a solo exhibition soon after his arrival. German Expressionism influenced his artistic output, as did his interest in social justice. He was an active teacher, and with Norman Bethune established the Children's Art Centre, a Montreal arts school for poor children.

**cavalier perspective**

Cavalier perspective, also called isometric perspective or oblique projection, is a painting or drawing technique that makes use of an elevated point of view, showing objects or scenes from above in a three-dimensional view. The technique is also used in mechanical drawing.

**Cézanne, Paul (French, 1839–1906)**

A painter of arguably unparalleled influence on the development of modern art, associated with the Post-Impressionist school and known for his technical experiments with colour and form and his interest in multiple-point perspective. In his maturity Cézanne had several preferred subjects, including portraits of his wife, still lifes, and Provençal landscapes.

**Concours artistiques de la province de Québec, Les**

In 1945 the first Grand Prize in Painting was awarded in the Quebec Provincial Art Competition, held annually until 1970 (though some years were missed). The competition included an annual exhibition at the Musée de la province de Québec (today the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec). The regulations required that the artworks that won first prizes in painting, sculpture, and decorative arts were purchased for the museum's collection.

**Conference of Canadian Artists (Kingston Conference)**

A conference organized by the painter André Biéler in 1941 in Kingston, Ontario, attended by some 150 visual artists, writers, poets, and others interested in the arts in Canada. Among those present were Lawren Harris, Elizabeth Wyn Wood, Arthur Lismer, Alma Duncan, F.R. Scott, Miller Brittain, Walter Abell, A.Y. Jackson, and the American painter Thomas Hart Benton. Based on Biéler's recommendation for a national federation of artists and on other initiatives of the conference, the Federation of Canadian Artists was set up; the visual arts magazine *Canadian Art* was launched; and in 1957 the Canada Council for the Arts was created.

**Contemporary Arts Society**

Founded in 1939 by John Lyman, this Montreal-based society promoted a non-academic approach to modernist art and linked artistic culture in Quebec to contemporary life. Early members included Stanley Cosgrove, Paul-Émile Borduas, and Jack Humphrey.

**Cosgrove, Stanley (Canadian, 1911–2002)**

A painter, fresco artist, and draftsman who returned repeatedly to the same few subjects and genres over his seventy-year career, particularly forests, women, and still lifes. In the 1940s he studied in Mexico City and apprenticed with the celebrated muralist José Clemente Orozco, an experience that would have a lasting impact on Cosgrove's style.

**Cubism**

A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.



**Cullen, Maurice (Canadian, 1866–1934)**

Like many Canadian painters of his generation, Maurice Cullen received his early art education in Montreal, then moved to Paris to continue his studies at the Académie Julian, the Académie Colarossi, and the Paris École des Beaux-Arts. He was influenced by Impressionism and his landscapes, in turn, influenced a younger generation of Canadian painters, including the Group of Seven. His winter landscapes and snowy urban scenes are considered his most impressive achievement.

**Curry, John (American, 1897–1946)**

A Kansas-born illustrator, painter, and lithographer of academic genre scenes and landscapes inspired by his Midwestern home. Along with artists like Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood, Curry epitomized American regionalism of the 1930s and 1940s.

**Dada**

A multi-disciplinary movement that arose in Europe in response to the horrors of the First World War, whose adherents aimed to deconstruct and demolish traditional societal values and institutions. Artworks, often collages and readymades, typically scorned fine materials and craftsmanship. Chief Dadaists include Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, and Hans Arp.

**Daumier, Honoré (French, 1808–1879)**

A prominent artist in politically tumultuous nineteenth-century Paris, known primarily as a satirist. Daumier's published drawings and lithographs viciously mocked political figures and the bourgeoisie, for which he was jailed for six months in 1832–33. He also helped develop the genre of caricature sculpture.

**Denis, Maurice (French, 1870–1943)**

A painter, printmaker, designer, and influential theorist whose ideas contributed to the development of the anti-naturalist aesthetic of modernism. Denis was a founding member of the Nabis, an avant-garde artists' group active in Paris from 1888 to 1900, and is also well known for his later, overtly religious works.

**Desiderio, Monsù**

It is now known that "Monsù Desiderio" was in fact two artists, François de Nomé (French, c. 1593–after 1644) and Didier Barra (French, c. 1590–1650). Natives of Metz living in Naples, they occasionally worked together. Barra primarily painted views of Naples, while de Nomé is known for his paintings of architecture, ruins, and fantastical buildings.

**Drouin, Michèle (Canadian, b. 1933)**

A poet and painter whose early figurative paintings were influenced by Jean Paul Lemieux, with whom she studied at the l'École des Beaux-Arts de Québec (now part of Université Laval) in 1951. In the 1970s Drouin turned to abstraction. The discovery of surrealist poetry informed both her writing and her art, which is more sensual than the work of the Plasticiens who were active in Montreal at the time. In 1992 she was named to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

**Dumas, Paul (Canadian, 1928–2005)**

An art critic, historian, and collector who wrote on such notable Quebec artists as Alfred Pellán, Benoît East, Jean Paul Lemieux, Claude Picher, Paul André, and Jean Dallaire. Dumas was also a medical doctor, with an interest in the role of art in the history of medicine.

**East, Benoît (Canadian, b. 1915–n.d.)**

A painter and printmaker influenced by luminaries of the French avant-garde, including Georges Braque and Henri Matisse. He is best known for creating, with Marius Plamondon, a sixty-foot stained glass window for Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel. East taught lithography and engraving at the École des beaux-arts de Québec (now part of Université Laval).

**École des beaux-arts de Montréal**

The École des beaux-arts de Montréal was founded in 1922, the same year as its sister institution, the École des beaux-arts de Québec. The curriculum emphasized industrial arts, trades, and commercial design, but the school gradually came into its own as an important training ground for painters, sculptors, and other serious artists, culminating in what has been called its "golden age" in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1969 it was absorbed into the fine arts department of the Université du Québec à Montréal.

**École des beaux-arts de Québec**

Founded in 1922, the École des beaux-arts de Québec became an important centre for the study of applied arts and fine arts, including architecture, drawing, engraving, tapestry, decorative arts (design), and art history. Among its famous students were Maximilien Boucher, Raoul Hunter, and Alfred Pellán. In 1970 the school became part of Université Laval.

**École du meuble**

In 1930 the artist Jean-Marie Gauvreau established the École du meuble, which trained its students in technical arts and drawing, painting, design, art history, sculpture, and even law. Many of Quebec's future avant-garde artists, including Paul-Émile Borduas, Marcel Barbeau, Maurice Perron, and other signatories of the *Refus global* (1948), taught or received their training here.

**Expressionism**

An intense, emotional style of art that values the representation of the artist's subjective inner feelings and ideas. German Expressionism started in the early twentieth century in Germany and Austria. In painting, Expressionism is associated with an intense, jarring use of colour and brush strokes that are not naturalistic.

**ex-voto**

Directed at a god or saint, an ex-voto is an offering: for something desired, or in gratitude for something that has been received. These offerings may be in the form of pictures, printed Bible verses, figurines, crucifixes, other religious objects, or small personal items such as clothing, jewellery, or toys.



**Faucher, Jean-Charles (Canadian, 1907–1995)**

A painter and illustrator influenced by mid-century American regionalist artists. Trained at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal), Faucher later taught art for the city's Catholic school board.

**Fauvism**

The style of the Fauves (French for “wild beasts”), a group of painters who took their name from a derogatory phrase used by the French journalist Louis Vauxcelles. As a historical movement, Fauvism began at the controversial Salon d'Automne in 1905, and ended less than five years later, in early 1910. Fauvism was characterized by bold, unmixed colours, obvious brush strokes, and a subjective approach to representation. Among the most important of the Fauves were Henri Matisse, André Derain, and Maurice de Vlaminck.

**Federal Art Project**

This American, New Deal agency organized and funded employment in the visual arts under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 and was part of the Works Progress Administration (renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939). Artists supported by the Federal Art Project created 200,000 murals, posters, illustrations, and fine artworks, many of lasting importance.

**Federation of Canadian Artists**

A non-profit, membership-based organization devoted to advancing Canadian art at home. It was founded in 1941 by artists including André Biéler and Lawren Harris, both members of the Group of Seven. The Federation of Canadian Artists maintains a members' gallery on Granville Island, Vancouver.

**Ferron, Marcelle (Canadian, 1924–2001)**

A painter, sculptor, and stained-glass artist and a member of the Montreal-based Automatistes. Ferron studied at the École des beaux-arts in Montreal (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) before meeting Paul-Émile Borduas, whose approach to modern art became crucial to her artistic development. In 1953 she moved to France, where she lived for thirteen years.

**Gagnon, Clarence (Canadian, 1881–1942)**

Although he travelled and lived in Europe periodically throughout his career, Clarence Gagnon is best known for his paintings of the people and landscapes of his native Quebec, and particularly the Charlevoix region. A virtuosic colourist, Gagnon created highly original winter scenes in vivid hues and generous play between light and dark. He is also known for illustrating books such as *Maria Chapdelaine* by Louis Hémon (1913) and *Le grand silence blanc* by L.F. Rouquette (1928).

**Gagnon, Maurice (Canadian, 1904–1956)**

An art critic and teacher at Montreal's École du meuble, Gagnon studied art history at the Sorbonne in Paris. His book *Peinture moderne* (1940) analyzes various schools of modern art, including religious art. He was a friend to luminaries of the French and Québécois avant-garde, including Fernand Léger and Paul-Émile Borduas.

**Garneau, Hector de Saint-Denys (Canadian, 1912–1943)**

A painter of luminous Quebec landscapes and a writer credited with modernizing poetry in French Canada. As a student at Montreal's École des beaux-arts (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) he was a friend of Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean Paul Lemieux, and other painters who would go on to define Quebec modernism. His own studies were cut short by his fragile health.

**Gauguin, Paul (French, 1848–1903)**

A member—with Vincent van Gogh, Georges Seurat, and Paul Cézanne—of the group of painters now considered the Post-Impressionists, Gauguin is known for his use of colour and symbolism and for his daring compositions. The paintings he made in Tahiti, representing an idealized “primitive” culture, are among his most famous.

**Gauvreau, Jean-Marie (Canadian, 1903–1970)**

An important figure in the history of Canadian decorative arts and design, Gauvreau helped transform Montreal's École technique into the École du meuble. The school became a centre for Quebec's avant-garde, drawing artists like Paul-Émile Borduas and others associated with the 1948 *Refus global* manifesto.

**Giotto (Italian, 1266/67–1337)**

An acknowledged master of the early Italian Renaissance who was equally celebrated in his own day: critics including Dante praised the naturalism of his pictures and considered him to have revived painting after a centuries-long slump. Among his most spectacular achievements is the fresco cycle decorating the walls of the Arena Chapel, Padua.

**Group of Seven**

A progressive and nationalistic school of landscape painting in Canada, active between 1920 (the year of the group's first exhibition, at the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the Art Gallery of Ontario) and 1933. Founding members were the artists Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley.



**Hébert, Adrien (Canadian, 1890–1967)**

The two sons of the sculptor Louis-Philippe Hébert, Adrien Hébert and his brother Henri (1884–1950), belonged to the liberal elite who favoured an open attitude toward change as the key to the future of French Canada. At a time when it was popular to celebrate the past and the traditional values of the Quebec countryside, the painter Adrien Hébert drew his inspiration from urban life in the city and port of Montreal. Boldly modern in his choice of subjects, he was more restrained in his treatment of form and colour.

**Holgate, Edwin (Canadian, 1892–1977)**

A painter, draftsman, and educator, best known for his portraits and for his woodcuts of figures set in landscapes. Holgate was a founding member of the Beaver Hall Group, a member of the Group of Seven, and a founding member of the Canadian Group of Painters.

**Iacurto, Francesco (Canadian, 1908–2001)**

A celebrated painter and art teacher, and a passionate defender of academic art over the course of his seventy-year career. An artistically gifted child, he entered Montreal's École des beaux-arts (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) at age fourteen. His landscapes, city views, and portraits show his interest in texture and wonderful abilities with light effects.

**Images of Épinal**

Colourful engraved cards made originally by a French publisher who established a printing company in 1796 and named it after Épinal, his birthplace. New techniques of mechanical printing allowed the images to be cheaply made, and they reached a wide public. The cards depicted simple, cheerful moral fables or jokes and riddles for children, and the name became a byword for conventionally optimistic sayings or empty clichés.

**Impressionism**

A highly influential art movement that originated in France in the 1860s and is associated with the emergence of modern urban European society. Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and other Impressionists rejected the subjects and formal rigours of academic art in favour of scenes of nature and daily life and the careful rendering of atmospheric effects. They often painted outdoors.

**Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique (French, 1780–1867)**

A master of Neoclassicism who learned from one of the greatest artists of his age, Jacques-Louis David. In history paintings, portraits, and Orientalist fantasies (such as his iconic *Grande Odalisque*, 1814) Ingres's brushwork is all but invisible and his emphasis on clean lines predominates. He is often contrasted with the exemplary Romanticist Eugène Delacroix.

**Italian Primitives**

The painters of the pre- and early Italian Renaissance, who worked from roughly the mid-thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth century. This was a transformative period in Italian art, when it moved from a Greek- or Byzantine-inflected style to that which we associate today with the Renaissance.

**Jackson, A.Y. (Canadian, 1882–1974)**

A founding member of the Group of Seven and an important voice in the formation of a distinctively Canadian artistic tradition. A Montreal native, Jackson studied painting in Paris before moving to Toronto in 1913; his northern landscapes are characterized by the bold brushstrokes and vivid colours of his Impressionist and Post-Impressionist influences.

**Kokoschka, Oskar (Austrian, 1886–1980)**

A painter, printmaker, and writer celebrated for his deeply expressive portraits and landscapes. An important figure in European modernism, Kokoschka sought to give visual form to the immaterial aspects of our world. Spiritual, psychological, and emotional forces are rendered through turbulent forms and luminous effects.

**Laliberté, Alfred (Canadian, 1878–1953)**

A sculptor best known for his monumental works and his statuettes and portrait busts depicting traditional Quebec culture. A lauded artist during his life, Laliberté was a member of both the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and France's prestigious Académie des beaux-arts. He taught at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) for thirty years.

**Léger, Fernand (French, 1881–1955)**

A leading figure of the Paris avant-garde, whose ideas about modern art, spread through his writing and teaching as well as his own artistic output, would guide a generation of artists. Prolific in media from paint to ceramics to film, Léger was appreciated for his diverse styles, which ranged from Cubist abstraction in the 1910s to realist imagery in the 1950s.

**Lismer, Arthur (British/Canadian, 1885–1969)**

A landscape painter and founding member of the Group of Seven, Lismer immigrated to Canada from England in 1911. He was also an influential educator of adults and children, and he created children's art schools at both the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto (1933) and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1946).

**lithograph**

A type of print invented in 1798 in Germany by Aloys Senefelder. Like other planographic methods of image reproduction, lithography relies on the fact that grease and water do not mix. Placed in a press, the moistened and inked lithographic stone will print only those areas previously designed with greasy lithographic ink.

**Lyman, John (Canadian, 1886–1967)**

A painter and art critic. Founder of the Contemporary Arts Society and a champion of Canadian artistic culture, Lyman established the short-lived art school The Atelier and wrote for the *Montrealer*. In opposition to perspectives invested in a distinctly Canadian painting style, Lyman advocated for an international approach.



**Matisse, Henri (French, 1869–1954)**

A painter, sculptor, printmaker, draftsman, and designer, aligned at different times with the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauvists. By the 1920s he was, with Pablo Picasso, one of the most famous painters of his generation, known for his remarkable use of colour and line.

**Milne, David (Canadian, 1881–1953)**

A painter, printmaker, and illustrator whose work—principally landscapes—displays the tonal brilliance and concern with process of his Impressionist and Post-Impressionist influences. Milne lived in New York early in his career, where he trained at the Art Students League and participated in the Armory Show in 1913.

**Miró, Joan (Spanish, 1893–1983)**

A prolific artist and important figure in the history of abstract art in the twentieth century. Miró engaged with painting, sculpting, printmaking, and decorative arts, and throughout his long career sustained thematic interest in the influence of his native landscape on his artistic creation. French Surrealism influenced his work, though he is recognized to have developed his own deeply personal style.

**modernism**

A movement extending from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in all the arts, modernism rejected academic traditions in favour of innovative styles developed in response to contemporary industrialized society. Beginning in painting with the Realist movement led by Gustave Courbet, it progressed through Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism and on to abstraction. By the 1960s, anti-authoritarian postmodernist styles such as Pop art, Conceptual art, and Neo-Expressionism blurred the distinction between high art and mass culture.

**Mondrian, Piet (Dutch, 1872–1944)**

A leading figure in abstract art, known for his geometric “grid” paintings of straight black lines and brightly coloured squares, whose influence on contemporary visual culture has been called the most far-reaching of any artist. Mondrian saw his highly restrictive and rigorous style, dubbed Neo-Plasticism, as expressive of universal truths.

**Monet, Claude (French, 1840–1926)**

A founder of the Impressionist movement in France. Monet’s landscapes and seascapes are among the canonical works of Western art. Introduced to *plein air* painting as a teenager, Monet returned to it throughout his life as a means of exploring the atmospheric effects and perceptual phenomena that so interested him as an artist.

**Morisset, Gérard (Canadian, 1898–1970)**

A lawyer by training, Morisset soon left the profession to dedicate himself to the study and promotion of Quebec culture. He was the director of the Musée du Québec from 1953 to 1965, and his collection of data and documentation related to Quebec artwork, begun in 1937, remains a valuable resource.

**Muhlstock, Louis (Galician/Canadian, 1904–2001)**

A painter and draftsman known for his sensitive and intimate representations of Depression-era Montreal. His celebrated talent for drawing comes through in his portraits, cityscapes, and interiors, which often show the effects of economic decline. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1991.

**Munch, Edvard (Norwegian, 1863–1944)**

Prefiguring the Expressionist movement, Munch's work prominently represented the artist's own emotions—fear, loneliness, sexual longing, and dread. A revered and prolific painter, printmaker, and draftsman, Munch is best known for his painting *The Scream*.

**Nabis**

Also called the Pont-Aven School. A group of young Post-Impressionist artists, including Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard, who met at the Lycée Condorcet in Paris, established themselves as a movement in the decade 1880–1890, and remained active until 1900. The Nabis (from the Hebrew *nebiim*, meaning “prophets” or “visionaries”) shared the Symbolists' belief that objects in nature represent ideas, and that the visible is the manifestation of the invisible. Their most important contribution to painting was an abstract, rhythmic organization of figures and ground on the surface of the canvas.

**Naturalism**

Naturalism was a development within the realist art of the nineteenth century that sought to show the forces and effects of nature in human life, rejecting the idealized classical subjects preferred by the academy. Naturalism favoured an accurate documentation of the real life of people in the streets and at work or at leisure, showing even the ugly, painful sides of existence.

**naïve art**

A term denoting art made by self-taught artists who eschew any style or school in favour of a more personal idiom. It was first used to describe the work of Henri Rousseau at the end of the nineteenth century.

**Newton, Lillas Torrance (Canadian, 1896–1980)**

A member of the Beaver Hall Group and the Canadian Group of Painters, Newton was among the most important portraitists of her time in Canada. Rideau Hall commissioned her for official portraits of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. She was the third woman to be elected as a full member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

**Orozco, José Clemente (Mexican, 1883–1949)**

A painter, draftsman, and printmaker and a leading figure in Mexico's mural movement. Active predominantly in Mexico City, from 1927 to 1934 Orozco



lived and worked in the United States, where he completed several important commissions. More interested in the human condition than in politics per se, he painted in a highly Expressionistic style that influenced many younger muralists.

**Palardy, Jean (American/Canadian, 1905–1991)**

A painter, writer, ethnologist, art historian, and filmmaker who studied at the Montreal School of Fine Arts. In 1941 he began a long association with the National Film Board as a director, screenwriter, cinematographer, and producer. His book on historical furniture design in Quebec was highly influential, and he became a consultant on restoration and museum projects, including the *Grande Hermine* (a replica of Jacques Cartier's ship), the Fortress of Louisbourg, and the Chateau Ramezay. He married the artist Jori Smith in the early 1930s.

**Parent, Omer (Canadian, 1907–2000)**

A painter, photographer, decorator, and filmmaker, and an important if secretive figure of the Quebec avant-garde. A close friend of Alfred Pellán and Fernand Léger, Parent moved with Pellán to Paris in 1926 to attend the École des arts décoratifs. He was the founder and first director of the École des arts visuels at Université Laval.

**Parizeau, Marcel (Canadian, 1898–1945)**

A prominent Québécois architect and teacher who trained at Montreal's École polytechnique and at the École des beaux-arts in Paris, where he lived for ten years. In 1933 Parizeau returned to Montreal, where he designed houses and municipal buildings—notably the huge silos of the city's Old Port—in the stripped down International Style.

**Pellán, Alfred (Canadian, 1906–1988)**

A painter active in Paris art circles in the 1930s and 1940s. In Montreal Pellán taught at the École des beaux-arts (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) from 1943 to 1952. He was the leader of the short-lived *Prisme d'yeux* (1948), a painters' group that opposed and wanted to discredit the ideas of the Automatistes. His work from the 1950s on is markedly Surrealist.

**Père Couturier (French, 1897–1954)**

Père Marie Alain Couturier was a Dominican friar, Catholic priest, and designer who played a major role in revivifying mid-twentieth-century sacred art in France. He believed that the liturgy and beauty were connected, and sought to join contemporary artistic tendencies to ecclesiastical decoration. Through his efforts, modern masters, including Henri Matisse, Fernand Léger, Marc Chagall, and Le Corbusier, came to create works for French churches. Couturier had a significant influence on the development of modern art in Quebec as a result of his stays in Montreal and Quebec City during the Second World War.

**Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)**

One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1906–7, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

**Picher, Claude (Canadian, 1927–1998)**

A landscape painter who studied in Quebec City under Jean Paul Lemieux before attending the New School for Social Research in the United States and Paris's École du Louvre and École des beaux-arts. His boldly graphic compositions are sometimes so stripped of detail and colour modelling as to border on abstraction.

**Pilot, Robert (Canadian, 1898–1967)**

A painter of landscapes, seascapes, and murals best known for his soft, atmospheric depictions of Maritime coastlines, the St. Lawrence River, and snow-capped Rocky Mountains. He was the stepson of Maurice Cullen, from whom he received much of his early training.

**Plamondon, Marius (Canadian, 1914–1976)**

A notable glass artist and sculptor, Plamondon first studied stained glass design in Paris with Henri Charlier in the late 1930s. On returning to Quebec he completed numerous important commissions, including a series of ten windows for St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. He was director of the École des beaux-arts de Québec (now part of Université Laval) from 1963 to 1970.

**Plasticiens**

A Montreal-based artists' group active from 1955 to 1959. Although not opposed to their contemporaries the Automatistes, the Plasticiens encouraged a more formalist, less subjective approach to abstract art, such as that of Neo-Plasticist Piet Mondrian. Members included Louis Belzile, Jean-Paul Jérôme, Fernand Toupin, and Jauran (Rodolphe de Repentigny).

**Pont-Aven School**

Also called the Nabis. Pont Aven is a commune (town and township) in Brittany, famous in the late nineteenth century for its picturesque charm and inexpensive accommodation. Numerous artists, among them Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet, and the Canadian Paul Peel, frequented Pont Aven, a place where artists practised very different styles of painting, from academicism to Impressionism. Some, influenced by Gauguin, called themselves Synthetists, because they worked with non-realist elements, pure colours, and flattened images.

**Post-Impressionism**

A term coined by the British art critic Roger Fry in 1910 to describe painting produced originally in France between about 1880 and 1905 in response to Impressionism's artistic advances and limitations. Central figures include Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh.

**Prisme d'yeux manifesto**

An artists' manifesto published on February 4, 1948, in Montreal, *Prisme d'yeux* was drafted by Jacques de Tonnacour and co-signed by fifteen artists, including Alfred Pellán, the founder of the group. Conceived of in opposition to the prescriptive Automatiste movement, *Prisme d'yeux* called for an art free of all aesthetic and ideological constraints.



***Refus global* (total refusal)**

A manifesto released in 1948 by the Automatistes, a Montreal-based artists' group. Written by Paul-Émile Borduas and signed by fifteen other members, the main text condemned the dominance of Catholic ideology and the social and political status quo in Quebec. The *Refus global* influenced the province's period of rapid change that came to be known as the Quiet Revolution.

**renewal of religious art (renouveau de l'art sacré)**

A movement that endeavoured to reconcile the art in Roman Catholic churches with modernity. It originated in France and evolved further in Quebec between 1930 and 1965. The French painter Maurice Denis was a significant figure in the movement; his artistic credo was that church art, including painting, sculpture, tapestry, and stained glass, needed to be revitalized and all traces of the rigid conventions of the past swept away. Prominent members in Quebec were the goldsmith Gilles Beaugrand, the sculptor Sylvia Daoust, the painter Ozias Leduc, and the painter and stained-glass artist Marius Plamondon.

**Renoir, Pierre-Auguste (French, 1841–1919)**

One of the foremost figures of the Impressionist movement. Renoir's prints, paintings, and sculptures often depict scenes of leisure and domestic ease. He left the Impressionists in 1878 to participate again in the Paris Salon, the city's officially sanctioned annual art exhibition.

**Rivera, Diego (Mexican, 1886–1957)**

A painter, draftsman, and celebrated muralist. Rivera was deeply committed to the idea of art's transformative power and to socialist ideals; his large-scale works typically exalt workers, revolutionaries, and indigenous and folk culture through a style and iconography that combines traditional and avant-garde techniques. He was famously married to Frida Kahlo from 1929 until her death in 1954.

**Roberts, Goodridge (Canadian, 1904–1974)**

A painter and influential teacher from New Brunswick, whose modernist sensibility developed in the late 1920s when he attended the Art Students League of New York. Roberts settled in Montreal in 1939 and within ten years was celebrated nationally for his careful but intense approach to figure painting, still life, and landscape.

**Rouault, Georges (French, 1871–1958)**

Known for his highly personal and expressive style, Rouault first gained notoriety in the early 1900s with his compassionate renderings of prostitutes and other marginalized people. Informed by Christian spiritualism, his work was finally embraced by the church shortly before his death.

**Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA)**

An organization of professional artists and architects, modelled after national academies long present in Europe, such as the Royal Academy of Arts in the U.K. (founded in 1768) and the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in Paris (founded in 1648). The RCA was founded in 1880 by the Ontario Society of Artists and the Art Association of Montreal.

**School of Paris**

A term denoting the loosely affiliated international and French artists who, from about 1900 to 1940, lived and worked in Paris, when it was a world capital of galvanizing, experimental art. Leading figures of the School of Paris include Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, and Amedeo Modigliani.

**sfumato**

One of the four essential modes used by Renaissance painters (the others were *cangiante*, *chiaroscuro*, and *unione*). The word is from Italian *sfumare*, to vanish or fade away like smoke. In painting it refers to softened images that shade imperceptibly between shadow and light, from one form to another, without sharp outlines. The face of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is an example of *sfumato*.

**Shahn, Ben (Lithuanian/American, 1898–1969)**

An influential painter, lithographer, and photographer whose artworks and career reflect a lifelong commitment to social justice. The paintings Shahn made before 1945, such as the portraits that refer to the Dreyfus Affair, were specific and highly detailed, while his later work was more inventive and addressed more general themes.

**Sloan, John (American, 1871–1951)**

Associated with Robert Henri and the Ashcan School, John Sloan was a prominent American painter, printmaker, and draftsman in the early twentieth century, known for his unsentimental portrayal of lower-class neighbourhoods and people. After the Armory Show in 1913, he became increasingly interested in formal issues and developed a technique known as hatching.

**Smith, Jori (Canadian, 1907–2005)**

A figurative painter and draftswoman trained at the École des beaux-arts in Montreal (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal), and a leading figure in that city's vibrant 1930s art scene. An admirer of Pierre Bonnard, she concentrated on portraits and interiors. She was made a member of the Order of Canada in 2002. Jori Smith married fellow artist Jean Palardy in the early 1930s.

**social-realist painting**

An art movement, left-wing in politics and figurative in style, that emerged in the United States in the 1930s. The artists' subject was the American scene, and their paintings illustrated working-class hardships during the Great Depression, showing street scenes and men and women at work. Notable members were Ben Shahn, William Gropper, and Jack Levine.



**Society of Canadian Artists**

Established in Montreal in 1867, this society lasted only until 1873. Significant figures lending their support or participation included Cornelius Krieghoff; John A. Fraser, a partner in William Notman's photographic business; the portraitist John Bell-Smith; and Allan Edson, a landscape painter from the Eastern Townships. The society's last exhibition was in 1872.

**Spring Exhibitions**

Between 1880 and 1965, Spring Exhibitions were held every year by the Art Association of Montreal (today the Montreal Museum of the Fine Arts). The exhibitions presented the latest trends in Quebec and Canadian art. The Salon and the prizes awarded became a very important showcase for young artists.

**Surrealism**

An early twentieth-century literary and artistic movement that began in Paris. Surrealism aimed to express the workings of the unconscious, free of convention and reason, and was characterized by fantastic images and incongruous juxtapositions. The movement spread globally, influencing film, theatre, and music.

**Suzor-Coté, Marc-Aurèle de Foy (Canadian, 1869–1937)**

A remarkably versatile artist, Suzor-Coté was a successful sculptor, painter, illustrator, and church decorator. In 1890 he left rural Quebec to study art in Paris and remained there for eighteen years, painting rural landscapes in an Impressionist style.

**Symbolism**

A literary movement that spread to the visual arts in the late nineteenth century. It encompasses work that rejects the representation of "real" space and incorporates spiritualist and revelatory aims—its artists sought to uncover the ideal world hidden within the knowable one. Important Symbolist painters include Paul Gauguin and the Nabis.

**William Brymner Prize**

Established in 1933, this prize for painting in oil or watercolour was reserved for Quebec artists under the age of thirty-five. Awarded by the Art Association of Montreal and funded by a group of friends of William Brymner, a Scottish-born Canadian painter and professor of art history.

**Wood, Grant (American, 1891–1942)**

An important regionalist painter of the American Midwest, best known for his endlessly reproduced and parodied double portrait *American Gothic*, 1930. His interest in Netherlandish art of the fifteenth century is evident in his work from the late 1920s on, with its hard edges, strong colours, and meticulously executed details.



## **woodcut**

A relief method of printing that involves carving a design into a block of wood, which is then inked and printed, using either a press or simple hand pressure. This technique was invented in China and spread to the West in the thirteenth century.





# SOURCES & RESOURCES

Jean Paul Lemieux's work as a painter and illustrator was always closely followed by his contemporaries, and his trajectory can be traced through exhibitions, critical texts, monographs, and documentaries they produced. Lemieux himself wrote prolifically on the art of his time. The following selection provides an overview of the vast number of sources and resources that offer insight into the richness and complexity of his work.



## MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

This selection from the archive includes solo and group exhibitions.



Jean Paul and Madeleine Lemieux at Lemieux's 1967 retrospective at the Musée du Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec), Quebec City

**1940**

November 22-December 15, 1940, *Art of Our Day in Canada*, organized by the Contemporary Art Society and presented at the Art Association of Montreal (now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).

**1942  
–44**

September 18-November 8, 1942, *Aspects of Contemporary Painting in Canada*, Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts. (Toured eight additional American cities: Northampton, Washington, Detroit, Baltimore, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Toledo, until December 1943, before having its Canadian premiere from January 20 to February 7, 1944, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.)

**1944**

March 11-April 16, 1944, *Canadian Art, 1790-1943*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

**1945**

January 10-28, 1945, *The Development of Painting in Canada, 1665-1945*, Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario). (Toured: Art Association of Montreal [now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts], Musée de la province de Québec [now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec], Quebec City, and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, until July 1945.)



- 
- 1946** November 18–December 28, 1946, *Exposition internationale d'art moderne*, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (exhibition mounted by UNESCO).
- 
- 1952** May 29–September 28, 1952, *Exposition rétrospective de l'art au Canada Français/The Arts in French Canada*, Musée de la province de Québec, Quebec City.
- 
- 1953** April 1953, *Jean Paul Lemieux* (first solo exhibition), lobby of the Palais Montcalm, Quebec City (forty-five canvases, mostly Charlevoix landscapes).
- 
- 1956** March 1–14, 1956, *Côte d'Azur* (solo exhibition), L'Atelier, Quebec City (twenty-eight canvases painted on the Côte d'Azur, France).
- 
- 1957** Dates unavailable, 4th Bienal de São Paulo, Museu de Arte Moderna, Brazil (with Takao Tanabe and Harold Town).
- April–October 1957, *Second Biennial of Canadian Art*, organized by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Toured Ottawa, Montreal, Stratford, and Regina.)
- 
- 1958–59** December 5, 1958–February 8, 1959, *Bicentennial International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, Department of Fine Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.
- 
- 1960** Dates unavailable, Canadian Pavilion, 30th Venice Biennale (with Graham Coughtry, Edmund Alleyn, Albert Dumouchel, and Frances Loring).
- 
- 1963–65** August 1963–May 1965, *La figuration vivante/The Lively Image*, organized and toured by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (with Alex Colville, Goodridge Roberts, Jacques de Tonnancour, and Claude Picher).
- October 1963–October 1965, *Fifteen Canadian Artists*, exhibition of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. (Toured ten additional American cities: Hunter Gallery of Art, October 6–November 3, 1963, Chattanooga, Tennessee; The Currier Gallery of Art, November 19–December 17, 1963, Manchester, New Hampshire; Phillips Exeter Academy, January 7–February 4, 1964, Exeter, New Hampshire; University of Texas, March 1–29, 1964, Austin; Washington Gallery of Modern Art, July 25–September 7, 1964, Washington, D.C.; Mercer University, September 20–October 18, 1964, Macon, Georgia; Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, November 5–30, 1964; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, March 8–April 5, 1965; San Francisco Museum of Art, June 7–July 5, 1965; City Art Museum of Saint Louis, September 5–October 4, 1965.)
- 
- 1963–64** December 18, 1963–January 5, 1964, *Cinq peintres canadiens*, Musée Galliera, Paris. With York Wilson (Toronto), Alfred Pellán (Montreal), Jean McEwen (Montreal), and Joe Plaskett (Vancouver).
- 
- 1964** February–March 1964, *Canadian Painting, 1939–1963*, Tate Gallery, London (exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa).

- 
- 1967** September 15–October 11, 1967, *Jean Paul Lemieux* (retrospective), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. (Toured Musée du Québec, Quebec City, October 18–November 22, 1967, and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, December 6, 1967–January 7, 1968.)
- May 12–September 17, 1967, *Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, October 20–November 20, 1967.
- May 15–August 20, 1967, *Panorama de la peinture au Québec, 1940–1966*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.
- 
- 1970** March 15–September 13, 1970, Canadian Pavilion, Expo '70, Osaka, Japan.
- 
- 1974–75** Dates unavailable. *Jean Paul Lemieux* (retrospective), organized by the Musée du Québec, Quebec City, for the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs. (Toured Moscow, Leningrad, Prague, Anvers, and Paris.)
- 
- 1975–76** January 31–March 2, 1975, *Canadian Painting in the Thirties*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Toured within Canada April 1, 1975–January 4, 1976.)
- 
- 1977** February 3–April 10, 1977, *Fourteen Canadians: A Critic's Choice*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- 
- 1982–83** April 23–June 13, 1982, *Modernism in Quebec Art, 1916–1946*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Toured within Canada July 4, 1982–February 27, 1983.)
- 
- 1984** Dates unavailable, *Présence de la peinture canadienne*, Centre culturel canadien, Paris (with forty other artists).
- 
- 1987** November 10–December 20, 1987, *Horizons et figures du peintre Jean Paul Lemieux*, Villa Bagatelle, Quebec City (twenty-two works from the years 1950 to 1985).
- 
- 1992–93** June 3–November 8, 1992, *L'effet Lemieux* (retrospective), at the Musée du Québec, Quebec City. (Toured Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, November 20, 1992–January 31, 1993; Art Gallery of Hamilton, March 11–May 23, 1993; and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, June 17–October 31, 1993.)
- 
- 2001–05** May 10, 2001–January 2, 2005, *Jean Paul Lemieux*, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.
- 
- 2004–05** October 22, 2004–January 2, 2005, *Homage to Jean Paul Lemieux*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Toured Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, February 2–April 24, 2005; and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, June 4–September 5, 2005.)
-



2005  
–07

November 24, 2005–February 4, 2007, *Jean Paul Lemieux. La période classique (1950–1975)*, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

2014

Jean Paul Lemieux. *De silence et d'espace* (permanent exhibition), Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

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"Les œuvres du peintre Gauguin." *L'Événement-Journal* (Quebec City), April 8, 1938, 16.

"Notes sur quelques toiles de Pellan." *Le Jour* (Montreal), May 14, 1938, 3.

"Aperçu sur la peinture contemporaine." *Le Jour* (Montreal), June 18, 1938, 2.

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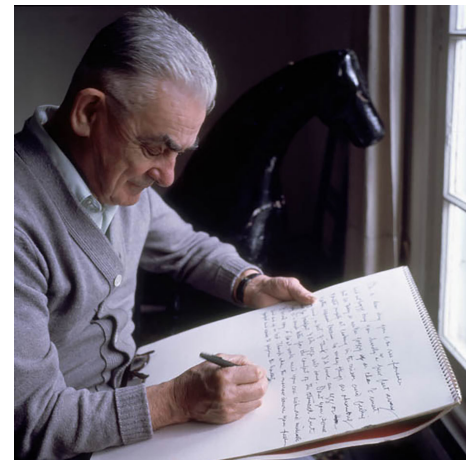
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Jean Paul Lemieux writing on a sketchpad. Photograph by Basil Zarov, 1977



A sheet of twelve stamps featuring paintings by Jean Paul Lemieux. The stamps, released on Canada Day, 1984, present work that depicts the provinces and territories of Canada.

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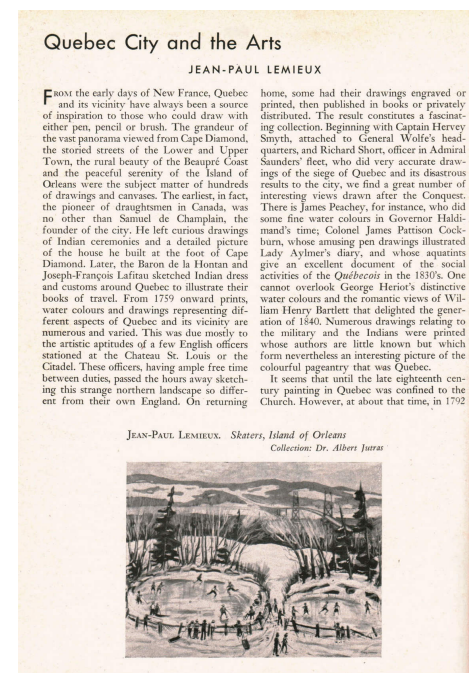
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Jean Paul Lemieux in front of a pathway in Charlevoix. Landscapes like the one in the background, with high horizon lines and dirt pathways, were clearly an influence on the artist's work.

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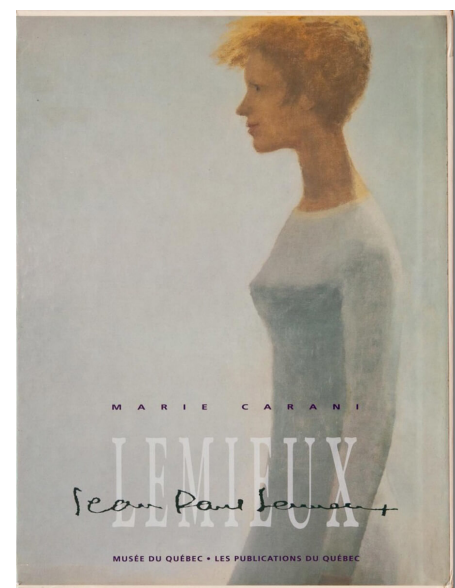
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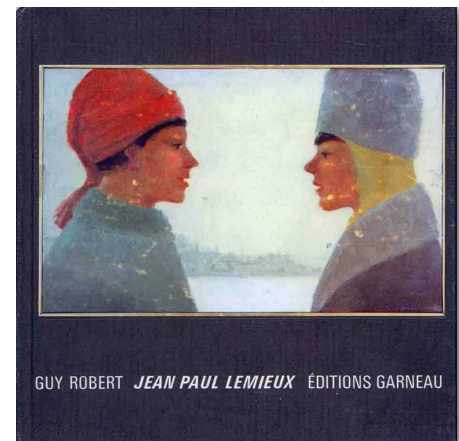
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Cover of the book *Jean Paul Lemieux, la poétique de la souvenance* by Guy Robert, published by Éditions Garneau in 1968. Lemieux's painting *Recontre*, n.d., is featured on the cover.

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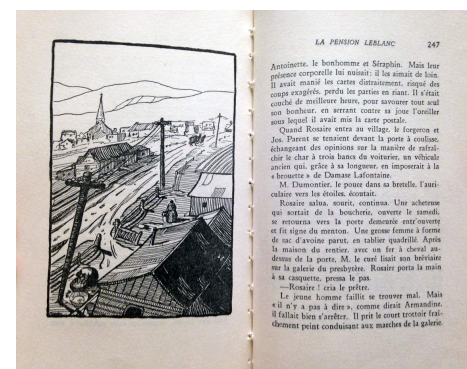
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Interior pages of *La pension Leblanc* by Robert Choquette, published in 1927, which features one of Lemieux's illustrations for the book.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### MICHÈLE GRANDBOIS

Michèle Grandbois is currently an independent researcher. She holds a doctorate in history from the Université Laval, and she taught art history before moving to the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) in 1987 as curator of the museum's collection of works on paper and then of its collection of modern art. She retired from the museum in 2014.

In addition to her activities in documentation, public representation, and expansion of the MNBAQ collections, Grandbois coordinated, directed, or co-directed some thirty exhibitions during her time as curator. She is the author of numerous monographs on Canadian artists, including Jean Dallaire, Clarence Gagnon, and Jean Paul Lemieux. Among her thematic writings are *L'art québécois de l'estampe, 1945-1990* and (co-written with Anna Hudson and Esther Trépanier) *The Nude in Modern Canadian Art, 1920-1950*, winners in 1996 and 2011 respectively of the Award of Outstanding Achievement in Research from the Canadian Museums Association. She was general editor of the book *Marc-Aurèle Fortin: L'expérience de la couleur* (*Marc-Aurèle Fortin: The Experience of Colour*), which was awarded the Prix Marcel-Couture at the 2011 Salon du livre in Montreal. Her last project as curator of the MNBAQ was the exhibition *Morrice and Lyman in the Company of Matisse*, presented in Quebec City in the summer of 2014.

Always seeking deeper understanding and animated by her desire to create greater public awareness of art history, Michèle Grandbois now devotes herself to writing projects on Canadian modern art.



**"From the beginning, it was Jean Paul Lemieux's spirit of independence that fascinated me. He was a painter whose modernism accorded with his own essential personality, and he followed the path of figuration in parallel with but separate from the artistic currents of his time. My published research on his work is the result of my long acquaintance with the paintings held by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, the best and most representative Lemieux collection in the country. To that opportunity for close study was added the challenge of fairly and accurately portraying this atypical artist. And there was an affinity: our shared unconditional love for Quebec City, where I too was born and grew up."**



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#### From the Author

As curator of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec I had the privilege of exploring and studying the institution's rich holdings of the work of the artist Jean Paul Lemieux. My research and publications on Lemieux are greatly indebted to Marie Carani, my doctoral thesis director at the Université Laval, whose indispensable book on the Québécois painter, published in 1992, eloquently documented his contribution to twentieth-century figurative art. Her inspiring work provided the solid base for new research, which I could not have accomplished without the generous and thoughtful support of Yves Lacasse and the prompt, efficient, and perceptive assistance of Nathalie Thibault and Nicole Gastonguay of the MNBAQ.

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The lines from the song "1910 Remembered," which appear with the key work *Julie and the Universe*, are published with the permission of Jean Lapointe and Marcel Lefebvre.

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Jean Paul Lemieux, *Summer of 1914 (L'été de 1914)*, 1965. (See below for details.)

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Key Works: Jean Paul Lemieux, *The Ursuline Nuns (Les Ursulines)*, 1951. (See below for details.)





Significance & Critical Issues: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Julie and the Universe (Julie et l'univers)*, 1965. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Jean Paul Lemieux, *A Day in the Country (Une journée à la campagne)*, 1967. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: Jean Paul Lemieux, *Ericson Exploring a Montreal Street*, 1972. (See below for details.)



Where to See: Jean Paul and Madeleine Lemieux at Lemieux's 1967 retrospective at the Musée du Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec). (See below for details.)

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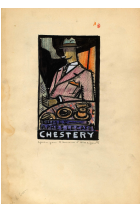
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*Self-portrait (Autoportrait)*, 1974, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City (2001.01). © Gestion A.S.L. Inc.



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"A New Modern Setting in Montreal," by Jean Paul Lemieux. *Technique: Revue industrielle/Industrial Review*, Montreal, vol. 10, no. 9 (November 1935), 444.



*A Quebec Farm*, c. 1930, by A.Y. Jackson. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Vincent Massey Bequest, 1968 (no. 15481). © Courtesy of Carleton University Art Gallery.



*Desire in the Light of the Moon (Désir au clair de la lune)*, 1937, by Alfred Pellán. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (no. 6109). © Estate of Alfred Pellán / SODRAC.



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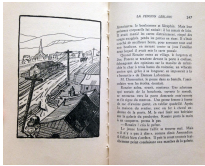
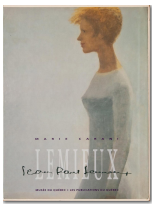


Illustration by Jean Paul Lemieux from Robert Choquette's *La pension Leblanc* (1927). Montreal and New York: Les éditions du Mercure.



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*Jean Paul Lemieux*, by Marie Carani (Quebec City: Musée du Québec/Les Publications du Québec, 1992). Exhibition catalogue.



Jean Paul Lemieux and Guy Viau, 1967. National Gallery of Canada Library & Archives, Ottawa.



Madeleine and Jean Paul Lemieux on their wedding day, 1937. Fonds Jean Paul Lemieux et Madeleine Des Rosiers, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3607389).



Jean Paul Lemieux in front of a pathway in Charlevoix. Fonds Jean Paul Lemieux et Madeleine Des Rosiers, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3607393).



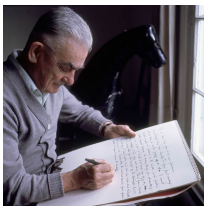
Jean Paul Lemieux in winter, Quebec, c. 1955-63. Rosemary Gilliat Eaton Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (4316752). Photograph by Rosemary Gilliat Eaton.



*Jean Paul Lemieux, la poétique de la souvenance* by Guy Robert (Quebec City: Éditions Garneau, 1968).



Jean Paul Lemieux with his brother at the Kent House hotel, c. 1910. Fonds Jean Paul Lemieux et Madeleine Des Rosiers, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3607384).



Jean Paul Lemieux writing on a sketchpad, 1977. Fonds Basil Zarov, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3596183). Photography by Basil Zarov.



Leaders of the Federation of Canadian Artists at a meeting in Toronto in May 1942. André Biéler Fonds, Queens University Archives.



Lemieux and his students during the Saturday drawing classes, 1948. Fonds Jean Paul Lemieux et Madeleine Des Rosiers, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3607382).





*Passing Shadows, Nicolet River (Les ombres qui passent, rivière Nicolet)*, 1925, by Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City (1934.14).



Madeleine and Jean Paul Lemieux at Lemieux's 1967 retrospective at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Courtesy Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.



*Martha*, c. 1938, by Lilius Torrance Newton. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City (1940.13). © National Gallery of Canada.



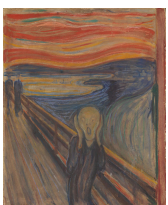
*Port-au-Saumon—Cap au Saumon North Shore, St. Lawrence River, Que.*, c. 1937, by Madeleine Des Rosiers. Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, gift of Cdr. and Mrs. C. Anthony Law (1994.22). © Gestion A.S.L. Inc.



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"Quebec City and the Arts" by Jean Paul Lemieux. *Canadian Art*, December 1947, 108–11.



*The Scream*, 1893, by Edvard Munch. National Gallery, Oslo.



*The Spinning Wheel*, 1928, by Edwin Holgate. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (no. 18260). © Estate of Edwin Holgate, Jonathan Rittenhouse, executor.



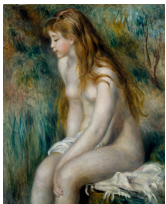
*Springtime*, c. 1894-99, by Maurice Denis. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of David Allen Devrishian, 1999 (1999.180.2a,b).



Students of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, c. 1927. Fonds Jean Paul Lemieux et Madeleine Des Rosiers, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3612641).



*Untitled*, 1954, by Paul-Émile Borduas. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (no. 38562). © Estate of Paul-Émile Borduas / SODRAC.



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